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SCOTTISH REPRINTS.—MURRAY'S EDITION.

Poetical Romances

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Scottish Reprints.



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.
THE LORD OF THE ISLES.
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.
AND
MARMION:
A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

WITH POEMS, NOTES, &c.

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT,
BARONET.

LONDON:
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1868.

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THE LADY OF THE LAKE

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

LOCH ACHRAY THE TROSACHS BENVENUE

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

A Poem.

IN SIX CANTOS.

WITH NOTES.

TO

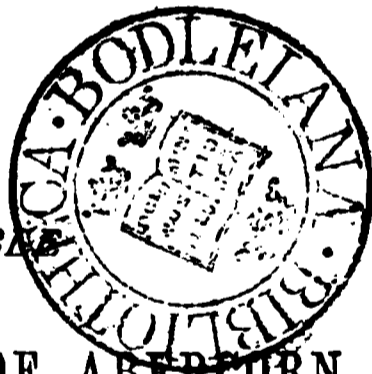
THE MOST NOBLE

JOHN JAMES MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,

&c., &c., &c.,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.



ARGUMENT.

The Scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch-Katrine, in the S.-W. Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

CANTO FIRST,	-	-	-	THE CHASE.
CANTO SECOND,	-	-	-	THE ISLAND.
CANTO THIRD,	-	-	-	THE GATHERING.
CANTO FOURTH,	-	-	-	THE PROPHECY.
CANTO FIFTH,	-	-	-	THE COMBAT.
CANTO SIXTH,	-	-	-	THE GUARD-ROOM.

EXTRACT FROM INTRODUCTION

TO THE

LADY OF THE LAKE.

AFTER the success of "Marmion," I felt inclined to exclaim with Ulysses in the "Odyssey"—

"One venturous game my hand has won to-day—
Another, gallants, yet remains to play."

The ancient manners, the habits and customs of the aboriginal race by whom the Highlands of Scotland were inhabited, had always appeared to me peculiarly adapted to poetry. The change in their manners, too, had taken place almost within my own time, or at least I had learned many particulars concerning the ancient state of the Highlands from the old men of the last generation. I had always thought the old Scottish Gael highly adapted for poetical composition. The feuds, and political dissensions, which, half a century earlier, would have rendered the richer and wealthier part of the kingdom indisposed to countenance a poem, the scene of which was laid in the Highlands, were now sunk in the generous compassion which the English, more than any other nation, feel for the misfortunes of an honourable foe.

I had also read a great deal, seen much, and heard more, of that romantic country, where I was in the habit of spending some time every autumn; and the scenery of Loch Katrine was connected with the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days. This poem, the action of which lay among scenes so beautiful, and so deeply imprinted on my recollections, was a labour of love, and it was no less so to recall the manners and incidents introduced.

I took uncommon pains to verify the accuracy of the local circumstances of this story. I recollect, in particular, that to

ascertain whether I was telling a probable tale, I went into Perthshire, to see whether King James could actually have ridden from the banks of Loch Vennachar to Stirling Castle within the time supposed in the Poem, and had the pleasure to satisfy myself that it was quite practicable.

After a considerable delay, "The Lady of the Lake" appeared in May, 1810; and its success was certainly so extraordinary as to induce me for the moment to conclude that I had at last fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of Fortune, whose stability in behalf of an individual who had so boldly courted her favours for three successive times had not as yet been shaken. I felt grateful to the public, as receiving that from partiality to me, which I could not have claimed from merit; and I endeavoured to deserve the partiality, by continuing such exertions as I was capable of for their amusement; and I had for several years dedicated my hours so much to literary labour, that I should have felt difficulty in employing myself otherwise.

During my short pre-eminence of popularity, I faithfully observed the rules of moderation which I had resolved to follow before I began my course as a man of letters. Let me add, that my reign (since Byron has so called it) was marked by some instances of good-nature as well as patience. I never refused a literary person of merit such services in smoothing his way to the public as were in my power: and I had the advantage, rather an uncommon one with our irritable race, to enjoy general favour, without incurring permanent ill-will, so far as is known to me, among any of my contemporaries.

W. S.

The Lady of the Lake.



CANTO FIRST.

The Chase.

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string,—
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause, was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony, sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bow'd;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye.

O wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet, if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then, silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I.

THE stag at eve had drunk his fill
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouth'd bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II.

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
"To Arms! the foemen storm the wall,"
The antler'd monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
A moment listen'd to the cry,
That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,
And stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.*

III.

Yell'd on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern, paid them bac
To many a mingled sound at once
The awaken'd mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bay'd deep and strong,
Clatter'd a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices join'd the shout;
With hark, and whoop, and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cower'd the doe;
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.

* See Note 1.

Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Return'd from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

Less loud the sounds of silvan war
Disturb'd the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where, 'tis told,
A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stay'd perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer,
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain side,
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wander'd o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And ponder'd refuge from his toil,
By far* Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood grey,
That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigour with the hope return'd,
With flying foot the heath he spurn'd,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;
What reigns were tighten'd in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagg'd upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith;
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reach'd the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

* See Note 2.

VII.

Alone, but with unabated zeal,
 That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
 For jaded now, and spent with toil,
 Emboss'd with foam, and dark with soil,
 While every gasp with sobs he drew,
 The labouring stag strain'd full in view.
 Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's * breed,
 Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed,
 Fast on his flying traces came,
 And all but won that desperate game;
 For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
 Vindictive toil'd the bloodhound's staunch;
 Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
 Nor farther might the quarry strain.
 Thus up the margin of the lake,
 Between the precipice and brake,
 O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII.

The Hunter mark'd that mountain high,
 The lone lake's western boundary,
 And deem'd the stag must turn to bay,
 Where that huge rampart barr'd the way;
 Already glorying in the prize,
 Measured his antlers with his eyes;
 For the death-wound and death-halloo,
 Muster'd his breath, his whinyard † drew;—
 But thundering as he came prepared,
 With ready arm and weapon bared,
 The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
 And turn'd him from the opposing rock;
 Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
 Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
 In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
 His solitary refuge took.
 There, while close couch'd, the thicket shed
 Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
 He heard the baffled dogs in vain
 Rave through the hollow pass amain,
 Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

IX.

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
 To cheer them on the vanish'd game;
 But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
 The gallant horse exhausted fell.

* See Note 3.

† See Note 4.

The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touch'd with pity and remorse,
He sorrow'd o'er the expiring horse.
"I little thought, when first thy rein
I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant grey!"

X.

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limp'd, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they press'd,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolong'd the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answer'd with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast
Till echo seem'd an answering blast;
And on the Hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it show'd

XI.

The western waves of ebbing day
Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,

Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair;
For, from their shiver'd brows display'd,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops sheen,
The briar-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII.

Boon nature scatter'd, free and wild
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the Hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,

But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meet the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crag, knoll, and mound, confusedly hurl'd,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed,
And, "What a scene were here," he cried,
"For princely pomp, or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister grey;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!
How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute!
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,

While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewilder'd stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

XVI.

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now,—beshrew yon nimble deer,
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting place;—
A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better miss'd than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.—
I am alone;—my bugle strain
May call some struggler of the train;
Or, fall the worse that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried,"

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touch'd this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal'd amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,

And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seem'd to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had train'd her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear
The list'ner held his breath to hear!

XIX.

A chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch such birth betray'd.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confess'd
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claim'd a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion pour'd a prayer,
Or tale of injury call'd forth
The indignant spirit of the North.

One only passion unreveal'd,
With maiden pride the maid conceal'd,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
O! need I tell that passion's name!

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne:—
"Father!" she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
A while she paused, no answer came,—
"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the nam
Less resolutely utter'd fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarm'd, with hasty oar,
Push'd her light shallop from the shore,
And when a space was gain'd between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen;
(So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.)
Then safe, though flutter'd and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly press'd its signet sage,
Yet had not quench'd the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould,
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb array'd,
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a Baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he show'd,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flow'd fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
Yet seem'd that tone and gesture bland,
Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wilder'd wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pull'd for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer."—
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has err'd," he said;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand,
I found a fay in fairy land!"—

XXIII.

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approach'd the side,—
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-Bane foretold your plight,—
A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent
Was on the vision'd future bent.
He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be,
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deem'd it was my father's horn,
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."

XXIV.

The stranger smiled:—"Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,

" Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
 A blade like this in battle-field."
 She sigh'd, then smiled and took the word;
 " You see the guardian champion's sword:
 As light it trembles in his hand,
 As in my grasp a hazel wand;
 My sire's tall form might grace the part
 Of Ferragus, or Ascabart;*
 But in the absent giant's hold
 Are women now, and menials old."

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
 Mature of age, a graceful dame;
 Whose easy step and stately port
 Had well become a princely court,
 To whom, though more than kindred knew,
 Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
 Meet welcome to her guest she made,
 And every courteous rite was paid,
 That hospitality could claim,
 Though all unask'd his birth and name.
 Such then the reverence to a guest,
 That fellest foe might join the feast,
 And from his deadliest foeman's door
 Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.
 At length his rank the stranger names,
 " The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
 Lord of a barren heritage,
 Which his brave sires, from age to age,
 By their good swords had held with toil;
 His sire had fall'n in such turmoil,
 And he, God wot, was forced to stand
 Oft for his right with blade in hand.
 This morning with Lord Moray's train
 He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
 Outstripp'd his comrades, miss'd the deer,
 Lost his good steed, and wander'd here."

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
 The name and state of Ellen's sire.
 Well show'd the elder lady's mien,
 That courts and cities she had seen;
 Ellen, though more her looks displayed
 The simple grace of sylvan maid,
 In speech and gesture, form and face,
 Show'd she was come of gentle race.

* See Note 6.

'Twere strange in ruder rank to find
 Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
 Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
 Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
 Or Ellen, innocently gay,
 Turn'd all inquiry light away:—
 "Weird women we! by dale and down
 We dwell, afar from tower and town.
 We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
 On wandering knights our spells we cast;
 While viewless minstrels touch the string,
 'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
 She sung, and still a harp* unseen
 Fill'd up the symphony between.

XXXI.

Song.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking:
 Dream of battled fields no more,
 Days of danger, nights of waking.
 In our isle's enchanted hall,
 Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
 Fairy strains of music fall,
 Every sense in slumber dewing.
 Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Dream of fighting-fields no more:
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
 Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
 Armour's clang, or war-steed champing
 Trump nor pibroch summon here
 Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
 Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
 At the day-break from the fallow,
 And the bittern sound his drum,
 Booming from the sedgy shallow.
 Ruder sounds shall none be near,
 Guards nor warders challenge here,
 Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
 Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."

XXXII.

She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
 To grace the stranger of the day.
 Her mellow notes awhile prolong
 The cadence of the flowing song,
 Till to her lips in measured frame
 The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

* See Note 7.

Song continued.

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
 While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
 Dream not, with the rising sun,
 Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
 Sleep! the deer is in his den;
 Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
 Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
 How thy gallant steed lay dying.
 Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
 Think not of the rising sun,
 For at dawning to assail ye,
 Here no bugles sound reveillé."

XXXIII.

The hall was clear'd—the stranger's bed
 Was there of mountain heather spread,
 Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
 And dream'd their forest sports again.
 But vainly did the heath-flower shed
 Its moorland fragrance round his head;
 Not Ellen's spell had lull'd to rest
 The fever of his troubled breast.
 In broken dreams the image rose
 Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
 His steedsnow flounders in the brake,
 Now sink his barge upon the lake;
 Now leader of a broken host,
 His standard falls, his honour's lost.
 Then,—from my couch may heavenly might
 Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
 Again return'd the scenes of youth,
 Of confident undoubting truth;
 Again his soul he interchanged
 With friends whose hearts were long estranged
 They come, in dim procession led,
 The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
 As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
 As if they parted yesterday.
 And doubt distracts him at the view—
 O were his senses false or true?
 Dream'd he of death, or broken vow,
 Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
 He seem'd to walk, and speak of love;
 She listen'd with a blush and sigh,
 His suit was warm, his hopes were high.

He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant's size,
With darken'd cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recall'd the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fix'd his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rush'd, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom,
Wasted around their rich perfume:
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Play'd on the water's still expanse,—
Wild were the heart whose passions' sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast:—
“Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain-maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fever'd dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme!
I'll dream no more—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resign'd.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.”
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consign'd to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose;
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawn'd on Benvenue.

CANTO SECOND.

The Island.

I.

AT morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
 'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
 All Nature's children feel the matin spring
 Of life reviving, with reviving day;
 And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
 Wafting the stranger on his way again,
 Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel* grey,
 And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
 Mix'd with the sounding harp, O white-hair'd Allan-bane!

II.

Song.

"Not faster yonder rowers' might
 Flings from their oars the spray,
 Not faster yonder rippling bright,
 That tracks the shallop's course in light,
 Melts in the lake away,
 Than men from memory erase
 The benefits of former days;
 Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
 Nor think again of the lonely isle.

"High place to thee in royal court,
 High place in battle line,
 Good hawk and hound for silvan sport,
 Where beauty sees the brave resort,
 The honour'd meed be thine!
 True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
 Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
 And lost in love and friendship's smile
 Be memory of the lonely isle.

III.

Song continued.

"But if beneath yon southern sky
 A plaided stranger roam,
 Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
 Pine for his Highland home;

* See Note 3.

Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
Remember then thy hap ere while,
A stranger in the lonely isle.

“Or if on life's uncertain main
Mishap shall mar thy sail;
If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
But come where kindred worth shall smile,
To greet thee in the lonely isle.”

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reach'd the mainland side,
And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seem'd watching the awakening fire;
So still he sate, as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;
So still, as life itself were fled,
In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sate and smiled.—
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vex'd spaniel, from the beach,
Bay'd at the prize beyond his reach?
Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
Why deepen'd in her cheek the rose?
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
Perchance the maiden smiled to see
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew;

And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
 Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
 Show me the fair would scorn to spy,
 And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI.

While yet he linger'd on the spot,
 It seem'd as Ellen mark'd him not;
 But when he turn'd him to the glade,
 One courteous parting sign she made;
 And after, oft the knight would say,
 That not when prize of festal day
 Was dealt him by the brightest fair,
 Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
 So highly did his bosom swell,
 As at that simple mute farewell.
 Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
 And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
 He parts—the maid, unconscious still,
 Watch'd him wind slowly round the hill;
 But when his stately form was hid,
 The guardian in her bosom chid—
 “Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!”
 ’Twas thus upbraiding conscience said,—
 “Not so had Malcolm idly hung
 On the smooth phrase of southern tongue;
 Not so had Malcolm strain'd his eye,
 Another step than thine to spy.—
 “Wake, Allan-Bane,” aloud she cried,
 To the old Minstrel by her side,—
 “Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
 I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
 And warm thee with a noble name;
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme!”*
 Scarce from her lip the word had rush'd,
 When deep the conscious maiden blush'd;
 For of his clan, in hall and bower,
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII.

The minstrel waked his harp—three times
 Arose the well-known martial chimes,
 And thrice their high heroic pride
 In melancholy murmurs died.
 “Vainly thou bid'st, O noble maid,”
 Claspings his wither'd hands, he said,
 “Vainly thou bid'st me wake the strain,
 Though all unwont to bid in vain.

* See Note 9.

Alas! than mine a mightier hand
 Has tuned my harp, my strings has spann'd!
 I touch the chords of joy, but low
 And mournful answer notes of woe;
 And the proud march, which victors tread,
 Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
 O well for me, if mine alone
 That dirge's deep, prophetic tone!
 If, as my tuneful fathers said,
 This harp, which erst Saint Modan * swayed,
 Can thus its master's fate foretell,
 Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII.

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sigh'd,
 The eve thy sainted mother died;
 And such the sounds which, while I strove
 To wake a lay of war or love,
 Came marring all the festal mirth,
 Appalling me who gave them birth,
 And disobedient to my call,
 Wail'd loud through Bothwell's banner'd hall,
 Ere Douglasses, † to ruin driven,
 Were exiled from their native heaven.—
 Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe,
 My master's house must undergo,
 Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
 Brood in these accents of despair,
 No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
 Triumph or rapture from thy string;
 One short, one final strain shall flow,
 Fraught with unutterable woe,
 Then shiver'd shall thy fragments lie,
 Thy master cast him down and die!"

IX.

Soothing she answer'd him—"Assuage,
 Mine honour'd friend, the fears of age;
 All melodies to thee are known,
 That harp has rung or pipe has blown,
 In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
 From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
 At times, unbidden notes should rise,
 Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
 Entangling, as they rush along,
 The war-march with the funeral song?—
 Small ground is now for boding fear;
 Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.

* See Note 10.

† See Note 11.

My sire, in native virtue great,
 Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
 Not then to fortune more resign'd,
 Than yonder oak might give the wind
 The graceful foliage storms may reave,
 The noble stem they cannot grieve.
 For me,"—she stoop'd, and, looking round,
 Pluck'd a blue hare-bell from the ground,—
 "For me whose memory scarce conveys
 An image of more splendid days,
 This little flower, that loves the lea,
 May well my simple emblem be;
 It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
 That in the King's own garden grows;
 And when I place it in my hair,
 Allan, a bard, is bound to swear
 He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
 Then playfully the chaplet wild
 She wreath'd in her dark locks, and smiled.

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
 Wiled the old harper's mood away.
 With such a look as hermits throw,
 When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
 He gazed, till fond regret and pride
 Thrill'd to a tear, then thus replied:
 "Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
 The rank, the honours, thou hast lost!
 O might I live to see thee grace,
 In Scotland's court, thy birth-right place,
 To see my favourite's step advance,
 The lightest in the courtly dance,
 The cause of every gallant's sigh,
 And leading star of every eye,
 And theme of every minstrel's art,
 The lady of the Bleeding Heart!" *

XI.

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried,
 (Light was her accent, yet she sigh'd ;)
 "Yet is this mossy rock to me
 Worth splendid chair and canopy;
 Nor would my footsteps spring more gay
 In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
 Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
 To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
 And then for suitors proud and high,
 To bend before my conquering eye,—

* The cognizance of the Douglas family.

Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
The terror of Loch-Lomond's side,
Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
A Lennox foray—for a day."—

XII.

The ancient bard his glee repress'd:
"Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled!
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the strid
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlaw'd, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disown'd by every noble peer,*
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
That thou might'st guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread;
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane."—

XIII.

"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
"My debts to Roderick's house I know:
All that a mother could bestow,
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrow'd o'er her sister's child;
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,

* See Note 12.

A deeper, holier debt is owed;
 And, could I pay it with my blood,
 Allan! Sir Roderick should command
 My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
 Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
 A votaress in Maronnan's cell;
 Rather through realms beyond the sea,
 Seeking the world's cold charity,
 Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
 And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
 An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
 Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV.

“Thou shakest, good friend, thy tresses grey—
 That pleading look, what can it say
 But what I own?—I grant him brave,
 But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;
 And generous—save vindictive mood,
 Or jealous transport, chafe his blood:
 I grant him true to friendly band,
 As his claymore is to his hand;
 But O! that very blade of steel
 More mercy for a foe would feel:
 I grant him liberal, to fling
 Among his clan the wealth they bring,
 When back by lake and glen they wind,
 And in the Lowland leave behind,
 Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
 A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
 The hand that for my father fought,
 I honour, as his daughter ought;
 But can I clasp it reeking red,
 From peasants slaughter'd in their shed?
 No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
 They make his passions darker seem,
 And flash along his spirit high,
 Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
 While yet a child,—and children know,
 Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
 I shudder'd at his brow of gloom,
 His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
 A maiden grown, I ill could bear
 His haughty mien and lordly air:
 But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
 In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
 I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
 A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
 To change such odious theme were best,—
 What think'st thou of our stranger guest?”—

XV.

"What think I of him?—woe the while
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
 For Tine-man * forged by fairy lore,
 What time he leagued, no longer foes,
 His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
 Did, self-unscaubarded, foreshow
 The footstep of a secret foe. †
 If courtly spy hath harbour'd here,
 What may we for the Douglas fear?
 What for this island, deem'd of old
 Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
 If neither spy nor foe, I pray
 What yet may jealous Roderick say?
 —Nay, wave not thy disdainful head,
 Bethink thee of the discord dread,
 That kindled when at Beltane game
 Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Græme;
 Still, though thy sire the peace renew'd,
 Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud;
 Beware!—But hark, what sounds are these?
 My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
 No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
 Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
 Still is the canna's hoary beard,
 Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
 And hark again! some pipe of war
 Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI.

Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
 Four darkening specks upon the tide,
 That, slow enlarging on the view,
 Four mann'd and masted barges grew,
 And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
 Steer'd full upon the lonely isle;
 The point of Briancholl they pass'd,
 And, to the windward as they cast,
 Against the sun they gave to shine
 The bold Sir Roderick's banner'd Pine.
 Nearer and nearer as they bear,
 Spear, spikes, and axes flash in air.
 Now might you see the tartans brave,
 And plaids and plumage dance and wave:

* Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises, that he acquired the epithet of *TINE-MAN*, because he *tined*, or lost, his followers in every battle which he fought.

† See Note 13.

Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters down, and sweep
The furrow'd bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sound, by distance tame,
Mellow'd along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wail'd every harsher note away,
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear;
Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
Of Old Clan-Alpine * to the fight.
Thick beats the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And hurrying at the signal dread,
The batter'd earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Express'd their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarr'd;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yell'd amain;
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain; but slow
Sunk in a moan prolong'd and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell,
For wild lament, o'r those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased; but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,

* See Note 14.

While loud a hundred clansmen raise
 Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
 Each boatman, bending to his oar,
 With measured sweep the burden bore,
 In such wild cadence, as the breeze
 Makes through December's leafless trees.
 The chorus first could Allan know,
 "Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
 And near, and nearer as they row'd,
 Distinct the martial ditty flow'd.

XIX.

Boat Song.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
 Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green Pine!
 Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
 While every Highland glen
 Sends our shout back agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"*

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
 When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moor'd in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
 Echo his praise agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Proudly our pibroch has thrill'd in Glen Fruin,
 And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied;
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
 And the best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on her side. †
 Widow and Saxon maid
 Long shall lament our raid,
 Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
 Lennox and Leven-glen
 Shake when they hear agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

* See Note 15.

† See Note 16.

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
 Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine!
 O, that the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
 O that some seedling gem,
 Worthy such noble stem,
 • Honour'd and bless'd in their shadow might grow!
 Loud shall Clan-Alpine then
 Ring from her deepest glen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! feroc!"

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
 Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.
 Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
 And high their snowy arms they threw,
 As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
 And chorus wild, the chieftain's name;
 While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
 The darling passion of his heart,
 The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
 To greet her kinsman ere he land:
 "Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
 And shun to wreath a victor's brow!"—
 Reluctantly and slow, the maid
 The unwelcome summoning obey'd,
 And, when a distant bugle rung,
 In the mid-path aside she sprung:—
 "List, Allan-Bane! From mainland east
 I hear my father's signal blast.
 Be ours," she cried, "the skiff to guide,
 And waft him from the mountain-side."
 Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
 She darted to her shallop light,
 And, eagerly while Roderick scann'd,
 For her dear form, his mother's band,
 The islet far behind her lay,
 And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
 With less of earth in them than heaven:
 And if there be a human tear
 From passion's dross refined and clear,
 A tear so limped and so meek,
 It would not stain an angel's cheek,
 'Tis that which pious fathers shed
 Upon a duteous daughter's head!

And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely press'd,
Such holy drops her tresses steep'd,
Though 'twas an hero's eye that weep'd.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Mark'd she, that fear (affection's proof)
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Mark'd Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dash'd, with hasty hand, away
From his dimm'd eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said—
"Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower's glistening eye?
I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day,
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arch'd gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answer'd loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshall'd crowd,
Though the waned crescent own'd my might,
And in my train troop'd lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymn'd her holiest lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,
A welcome give more kind and true,
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,
O! it out-beggars all I lost!"

XXIV.

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appear'd,
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.

The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relax'd his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweigh'd her worth, and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature tall, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curl'd closely round his bonnet blue.
Train'd to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy:
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though wing'd with fear,
Outstripp'd in speed, the mountaineer:
Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;
It danced as lightsome in his breast,
As play'd the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, "O my sire!" did Ellen say,
"Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late return'd? And why"—
The rest was in her speaking eye.
"My child, the chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I stray'd
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
Nor stray'd I safe; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scour'd the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risked life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Redden'd at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Fail'd aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared,
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seemed toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made,
Ere he assembled round the flame,
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme.
And Ellen, too; then cast around
His eyes, then fix'd them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he play'd,
Then raised his haughty brow and said:—

XXVIII.

"Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father,—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;

Mine honour'd mother:—Ellen—why,
 My cousin, turn away thine eye?—
 And Græme; in whom I hope to know
 Full soon a noble friend or foe,
 When age shall give thee thy command,
 And leading in thy native land,—
 List all!—The King's vindictive pride
 Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,*
 Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
 To share their monarch's silvan game,
 Themselves in bloody toils were snared;
 And when the banquet they prepared,
 And wide their loyal portals flung,
 O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
 Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
 From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,
 Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
 And from the silver Teviot's side;
 The dales, where martial clans did ride,
 Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
 This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
 So faithless, and so ruthless known,
 Now hither comes; his end the same,
 The same pretext of silvan game.
 What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye†
 By fate of Border chivalry.
 Yet more; amid Glenfinlas green,
 Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
 This by espial sure I know:
 Your counsel in the streight I show."

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
 Sought comfort in each other's eye,
 Then turn'd their ghastly look, each one,
 This to her sire, that to her son.
 The hasty colour went and came
 In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme;
 But from his glance it well appear'd,
 'Twas but for Ellen that he fear'd;
 While, sorrowful, but undismay'd,
 The Douglas thus his counsel said:—
 "Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
 It may but thunder and pass o'er;
 Nor will I here remain an hour,
 To draw the lightning on thy bower;
 For well thou know'st, at this grey head
 The royal bolt were fiercest sped.

* See Note 17.

† See Note 18.

For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek, apart,
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor,
The stern pursuit be pass'd and o'er."

XXX.

"No, by mine honour," Roderick said,
"So help me Heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My father's ancient crest and mine;
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech; grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief,
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
And, when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!
—Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heart might say.—
Small need of inroad, or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foil'd king, from pathless glen,
Shall bootless turn him home agen."

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean tide's incessant roar,
Dream'd calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till waken'd by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,

And saw unmeasured depth around,
 And heard unintermitted sound,
 And thought the battled fence so frail,
 It waved like cobweb in the gale;—
 Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
 Did he not desperate impulse feel,
 Headlong to plunge himself below,
 And meet the worst his fears foreshow?—
 Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
 As sudden ruin yawn'd around,
 By crossing terrors wildly toss'd,
 Still for the Douglas fearing most,
 Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
 To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
 In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
 And eager rose to speak—but ere
 His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
 Had Douglas mark'd the hectic strife,
 Where death seem'd combating with life;
 For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
 One instant rush'd the throbbing blood,
 Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
 Left its domain as wan as clay.
 "Roderick, enough! enough!" he cried,
 "My daughter cannot be thy bride;
 Not that the blush to wooer dear,
 Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
 It may not be—forgive her, Chief,
 Nor hazard aught for our relief.
 Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
 Will level a rebellious spear.
 'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
 To rein a steed and wield a brand;
 I see him yet, the princely boy!
 Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
 I love him still, despite my wrongs,
 By hasty wrath, and slanderous tongues.
 O seek the grace you well may find,
 Without a cause to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
 The waving of his tartans broad,
 And darken'd brow, where wounded pride
 With ire and disappointment vied,
 Seem'd, by the torch's gloomy light,
 Like the ill Demon of the night,

Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
 Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:
 But, unrequited Love! thy dart
 Plunged deepest its envenom'd smart,
 And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
 At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
 While eyes, that mock'd at tears before,
 With bitter drops were running o'er.
 The death-pangs of long-cherish'd hope
 Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
 But, struggling with his spirit proud,
 Convulsive heaved it's chequered shroud,
 While every sob—so mute were all—
 Was heard distinctly through the hall.
 The son's despair, the mother's look,
 Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
 She rose, and to her side there came,
 To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
 As flashes flame through sable smoke,
 Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
 To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
 So the deep anguish of despair
 Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
 With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:
 "Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
 "Back, minion! hold'st thou thus at nought
 The lesson I so lately taught?
 This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
 Thank thou for punishment delayed."
 Eager as greyhound on his game,
 Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
 "Perish my name, if aught afford
 Its Chieftain safety save his sword!"
 Thus as they strove, their desperate hand
 Gripped to the dagger or the brand,
 And death had been—but Douglas rose,
 And thrust between the struggling foes
 His giant strength:—"Chieftains, forego!
 I hold the first who strikes, my foe.—
 Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
 What! is the Douglas fall'n so far,
 His daughter's hand is doom'd the spoil
 Of such dishonourable broil!"
 Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
 As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,

And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
As falter'd through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
And veil'd his wrath in scornful word:
"Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
Then mayest thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey, with his freeborn clan,
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes show.—
Malise, what ho!"—his henchman came; *
"Give our safe-conduct to the Græme."
Young Malcolm answer'd, calm and bold,
"Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;
The spot, an angel deign'd to grace,
Is bless'd, though robbers haunt the place.
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back,
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.—
Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
Nought here of parting will I say
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen,
So secret, but we meet agen.—
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,"—
He said, and left the silvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan follow'd to the strand,
(Such was the Douglas's command),
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme,
From those who to the signal came;
Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand,

* See Note 19.

He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword roll'd,
His ample plaid in tighten'd fold,
And stripp'd his limbs to such array,
As best might suit the watery way,—

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt:—"Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"
The Minstrel's hand he kindly press'd,—
O! could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
Who loves the chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honour'd Douglas dwell,
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swoll'n robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain side."
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steer'd him from the shore;
And Allan strained his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave,
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD.

The Gathering.

I.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced their infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and wither'd of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless course.
Yet live there still who can remember well
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yell'd the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.*

II.

The Summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirr'd the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemm'd with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain-side,
The torrent show'd its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;

* See Note 20.

In answer coo'd the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood aft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As from the cliffs of Benvenue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of wither'd boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian, the Hermit, by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grisled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seam'd o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and face,*
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose harden'd heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look;
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
Mix'd in the charms he mutter'd o'er.
The hallow'd creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse;

* See Note 21.

No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunn'd with care,
The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase call'd off his hound;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He pray'd, and sign'd the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien.

V.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.
His mother watch'd a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scatter'd lay the bones of men,
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleach'd by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fetter'd there the hand,
Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That buckler'd heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The field-fare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blind-worm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mock'd at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreath'd with chaplet, flush'd and full,
For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this sad glen, the maid
Sate, shrouded in her mantle's shade:
—She said, no shepherd sought her side,
No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood* did Alice wear;
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short,
Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy church or blessed rite,
But lock'd her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfess'd.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,

* See Note 22.

Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
To wood and stream his hap to wail,
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed,
And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
The cloister oped her pitying gate;
In vain, the learning of the age
Unclasp'd the sable-letter'd page;
Even in its treasures he could find
Food for the fever of his mind.
Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,
And every dark pursuit allied
To curious and presumptuous pride;
Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,¹
Such as might suit the spectre's child.*
Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
He watch'd the wheeling eddies boil,
Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
Beheld the River Demon rise;
The mountain mist took form and limb,
Of noontide hag, or goblin grim;
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swell'd with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death:
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurl'd,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;†
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
Of charging steeds, careering fast‡
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horsemen ne'er might ride;

* See Note 23.

† See Note 24.

‡ See Note 25.

The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
 All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
 He girt his loins, and came to show
 The signals of impending woe,
 And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
 As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.[†]

'Twas all prepared;—and from the rock,
 A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
 Before the kindling pile was laid,
 And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
 Patient the sickening victim eyed
 The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
 Down his clogg'd beard and shaggy limb,
 Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
 The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
 A slender crosslet form'd with care,
 A cubit's length in measure due;
 The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
 Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave *
 Their shadows o'er Clan Alpine's grave,
 And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
 Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
 The cross, thus form'd, he held on high,
 With wasted hand, and haggard eye,
 And strange and mingled feelings woke,
 While his anathema he spoke:

IX.

"Woe to the clansman, who shall view
 This symbol of sepulchral yew,
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
 On Alpine's dwelling low!
 Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
 He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
 But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
 Each clansman's execration just
 Shall doom him wrath and woe."
 He paused;—the word the vassals took,
 With forward step and fiery look,
 On high their naked brands they shook,
 Their clattering targets wildly strook;
 And first in murmur low,
 Then, like the billow in his course,
 That far to seaward finds his source,
 And flings to shore his muster'd force,
 Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,

* See Note 26.

"Woe to the traitor, woe!"
Ben-an's grey scalp the accents knew,
The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle scream'd afar,—
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X.

The shout was hush'd on lake and fell,
The Monk resumed his mutter'd spell:
Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
And the few words that reach'd the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
"Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home the refuge of his fear,
A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
And infamy and woe."
Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curses stammer'd slow;
Answering, with imprecation dread,
"Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursed be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless head,
We doom to want and woe!"
A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the grey pass where birches wave,
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his labouring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
And eyes that glow'd like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
Who, summon'd to his chieftain's aid,
The signal saw and disobeyed.

The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
He quench'd among the bubbling blood,
And, as again the sign he rear'd,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
"When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart their prize!
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark!
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!"
He ceased; no echo gave agen
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took:
"Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
"The muster-place be Lanrick mead--
Instant the time--speed, Malise, speed!"
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew;
High stood the henchman on the prow,
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had near'd the mainland hill;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;

The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap;
Parch'd are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace,
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed,
Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed!

XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They pour'd each hardy tenant down,
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
He show'd the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamour and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swathe the scythe;
The herds without a keeper stray'd,
The plough was in mid-furrow stayed,
The falc'ner toss'd his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rush'd to arms;
So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol, from the cloud,
Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed! The lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half-seen,
Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayest thou rest, thy labour done,
Their Lord shall speed the signal on,—
As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman shot him down the way.

—What woeful accents load the gale?
 The funeral yell, the female wail!
 A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
 A valiant warrior fights no more.
 Who, in the battle or the chase,
 At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
 Within the hall, where torches' ray
 Supplies the excluded beams of day,
 Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
 And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
 His stripling son stands mournful by,
 His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
 The village maids and matrons round
 The dismal coronach resound.

XVI.

Coronach.

He is gone on the mountain,
 He is lost to the forest,
 Like a summer-dried fountain,
 When our need was the sorest,
 The font, reappearing,
 From the rain-drops shall borrow,
 But to us comes no cheering,
 To Duncan no morrow!
 The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper
 Wails manhood in glory.
 The autumn winds rushing
 Waft the leaves that are searest,
 But our flower was in flushing,
 When blighting was nearest.
 Fleet foot on the correi,*
 Sage counsel in cumber,
 Red hand in the foray,
 How sound is thy slumber!
 Like the dew on the mountain,
 Like the foam on the river,
 Like the bubble on the fountain,
 Thou art gone, and for ever!

XVII.

See Stumah, † who, the bier beside,
 His master's corpse with wonder eyed,
 Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
 Could send like lightning o'er the dew,

* The hollow side of the hill, where game usually lies.
 † *Faithful*, the name of a dog.

Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man's bier he stood;
Held forth the cross besmear'd with blood;
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!"

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her open'd arms he flew,
Press'd on her lips a fond adieu—
"Alas!" she sobb'd,—“and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!”
One look he cast upon the bier,
Dash'd from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep to clear his labouring breast,
And toss'd aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt, when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanish'd, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she mark'd the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
"Kinsman," she said, "his race is run,
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fall'n,—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead."
Then weapon-clang, and martial call,
Resounded through the funeral hall,

While from the walls the attendant band
 Snatch'd sword and targe, with hurried hand;
 And short and flitting energy
 Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
 As if the sounds to warrior dear
 Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
 But faded soon that borrow'd force;
 Grief claim'd his right, and tears their course.

XIX.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
 It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
 O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
 Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew;
 The tear that gather'd in his eye
 He left the mountain-breeze to dry;
 Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
 Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
 That graced the sable strath with green,
 The chapel of St Bride was seen.*
 Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
 But Angus paused not on the edge;
 Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
 Though reel'd his sympathetic eye,
 He dash'd amid the torrent's roar:
 His right hand high the crosslet bore,
 His left the pole-axe grasp'd, to guide
 And stay his footing in the tide.
 He stumbled twice—the foam splash'd high,
 With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
 And had he fall'n,—for ever there,
 Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
 But still, as if in parting life,
 Firmer he grasp'd the Cross of strife,
 Until the opposing bank he gain'd,
 And up the chapel pathway strain'd.

XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
 Had sought the chapel of St Bride.
 Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
 To Norman, heir of Armandave,
 And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
 The bridal now resumed their march.
 In rude, but glad procession, came
 Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
 And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
 Which snooded maiden would not hear;

* St Bride's Chapel stands by the side of the Teith, near Loch Lubnaig. The rest of the course was by Loch Voil, Loch Doine, to the source of Balvaig, and thence down Strath-Gartney.

And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step, and bashful hand,
She held the 'kerchief's snowy band;
The gallant bridegroom, by her side,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the churchyard gate
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soil'd he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;*
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!"
And must he change so soon the hand,
Just link'd to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day, so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
Her summons dread, brook no delay;
Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced, till on the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.
—What in the racer's bosom stirr'd?
The sickening pang of hope deferr'd,
And memory, with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.

* See Note at close of this Canto.

Mingled with love's impatience, came
 The manly thirst for martial fame;
 The stormy joy of mountaineers,
 Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
 And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
 And hope, from well-fought field returning,
 With war's red honours on his crest,
 To clasp his Mary to his breast.
 Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
 Like fire from flint he glanced away,
 While high resolve, and feeling strong,
 Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

Song.

The heath this night must be my bed,
 The bracken* curtain for my head,
 My lullaby the warder's tread,
 Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
 To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
 My couch may be my bloody plaid,
 My vesper song, thy wail, sweet maid!
 It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
 The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
 I dare not think upon thy vow,
 And all it promised me, Mary.
 No fond regret must Norman know;
 When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
 His heart must be like bended bow,
 His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
 For, if I fall in battle fought,
 Thy hapless lover's dying thought
 Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
 And if return'd from conquer'd foes,
 How blithely will the evening close,
 How sweet the linnet sing repose,
 To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
 Balquhiddy, speeds the midnight blaze,
 Rushing, in conflagration strong,
 Thy deep ravines and dells along,
 Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
 And reddening the dark lakes below;

* *Bracken*, fern.

Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil,
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
Alarm'd, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turn'd its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the grey sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequester'd glen,
Muster'd its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood,
Each train'd to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
Survey'd the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came with news of truce;
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
Nor scared the herons from Loch Chon;
All seem'd at peace.—Now wot ye why
The Chieftain, with such anxious eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scann'd with care?—
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair, though cruel, pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequester'd dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.

By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet,
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawn'd like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had staid full many a rock,
Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's grey summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frown'd incumbent o'er the spot,
And form'd the rugged silvan grot.*
The oak and birch, with mingled shade,
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.
Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
Seem'd nodding o'er the cavern grey.
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.
Grey Superstition's whisper dread
Debarr'd the spot to vulgar tread;
For there, she said, did fays resort,
And satyrs hold their silvan court,
By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
When Roderick, with a chosen few,
Repass'd the heights of Benvenue.
Above the Goblin-cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;

* See Note 27.

The prompt retainers speed before,
To launch the shallop from the shore,
For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array;
Yet lags the chief in musing mind,
Unwonted sight, his men behind.
A single page, to bear his sword,*
Alone attended on his lord;
The rest their way through thickets break,
And soon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant sight,
To view them from the neighbouring height,
By the low-levell'd sunbeam's light!
For strength and stature, from the clan
Each warrior was a chosen man,
As even afar might well be seen,
By their proud step and martial mien.
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turn'd apart the road
To Douglas's obscure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn
That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove—
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
Still hovering near his treasure lost;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly strains his anxious ear,
The accents of her voice to hear,
And inly did he curse the breeze
That waked to sound the rustling trees.
But hark! what mingles in the strain?
It is the harp of Allan-Bane,
That wakes its measure slow and high,
Attun'd to sacred minstrelsy.
What melting voice attends the strings?
'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings.

* See Note 28.

By many a bard, in Celtic
 Has Coir-nan-Uriskin
 A softer name the Sax
 And called the grot

It was a wild an
 As e'er was tro
 The dell, upo
 Yawn'd like
 Its trench
 Hurl'd b
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...y air
 ...alm if thou hast smiled;
 ... hear a maiden's prayer,
 ... list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Stainless styled!
 Foul demons of the earth and air,
 From this their wonted haunt exiled,
 Shall flee before thy presence fair.
 We bow us to our lot of care,
 Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
 Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
 And for a father hear a child!

Ave Maria!

xxx.

Died on the harp the closing hymn—
 Unmoved in attitude and limb,
 As list'ning still, Clan-Alpine's lord
 Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
 Until the page, with humble sign,
 Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
 Then while his plaid he round him cast,
 "It is the last time—'tis the last,"
 He mutter'd thrice,—“the last time e'er
 That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!”
 It was a goading thought—his stride
 Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
 Sullen he flung him in the boat,
 And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
 They landed in that silvery bay,
 And eastward held their hasty way,

Till, with th
The band a:
Where mus
Clan-Alpin

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ss where, here and there

or lance's point, a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell;
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And silence claim'd her evening reign.

NOTE.—Inspection of the provincial map of Perthshire, or any large map of Scotland, will trace the progress of the signal through the small district of lakes and mountains, which, in exercise of my poetical privilege, I have subjected to the authority of my imaginary chieftain, and which, at the period of my romance, was really occupied by a clan who claimed a descent from Alpine; a clan the most unfortunate, and most persecuted, but neither the least distinguished, least powerful, nor least brave, of the tribes of the Gael.

The first stage of the Fiery Cross is to Duncraggan, a place near the Brigg of Turk, where a short stream divides Loch Achray from Loch Vennachar. From thence, it passes towards Callender, and then, turning to the left up the pass of Leny, is consigned to Norman at the Chapel of Saint Bride, which stood on a small and romantic knoll in the middle of the valley, called Strath Ire. Tombea and Armandave are names of places in the vicinity. The alarm is then supposed to pass along the lake of Lubnaig, and through the various glens in the district of Balquidder, including the neighbouring tracts of Glenfinlas and Strathartney.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Prophecy.

I.

"THE rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
 And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears:
 The rose is sweetest wash'd with morning dew,
 And love is loveliest when embalm'd in tears,
 O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
 I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
 Emblem of hope and love through future years!"
 Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
 What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
 Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
 All while he stripp'd the wild-rose spray,
 His axe and bow beside him lay,
 For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
 A wakeful sentinel he stood.
 Hark!—on the rock a footstep rung,
 And instant to his arms he sprung.
 "Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
 Art thou return'd from Braes of Doune.
 By thy keen step and glance I know,
 Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe."—
 (For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
 On distant scout had Malise gone.)
 "Where sleeps the Chief?" the henchman said.
 "Apart, in yonder misty glade;
 To his lone couch I'll be your guide."—
 Then call'd a slumberer by his side,
 And stirr'd him with his slacken'd bow—
 "Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
 We seek the Chieftain; on the track,
 Keep eagle watch till I come back."

III.

Together up the pass they sped:
 "What of the foeman?" Norman said.—
 "Varying reports from near and far;
 This certain,—that a band of war
 Has for two days been ready boune,
 At prompt command, to march from Doune;
 King James, the while, with princely powers,
 Holds revelry in Stirling towers.

Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
 Speak on our glens in thunder loud,
 Inured to bide such bitter bout,
 The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
 But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
 A shelter for thy bonny bride?"—
 "What! know ye not that Roderick's care
 To the lone isle hath caused repair
 Each maid and matron of the clan,
 And every child and aged man
 Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
 Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
 Upon these lakes shall float at large,
 But all beside the islet moor,
 That such dear pledge may rest secure?"

IV.

"'Tis well advised—the Chieftain's plan
 Bespeaks the father of his clan,
 But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
 Apart from all his followers true?"—
 "It is, because last evening-tide
 Brian an augury hath tried,
 Of that dread kind which must not be
 Unless in dread extremity,
 The Taghairm call'd;* by which, afar,
 Our sires foresaw the events of war.
 Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew."

MALISE.

"Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
 The choicest of the prey we had,
 When swept our merry-men Gallangad,†
 His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
 His red eye glow'd like fiery spark;
 So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
 Sore did he cumber our retreat,
 And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
 Even at the pass of Beal 'maha,
 But steep and flinty was the road,
 And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
 And when we came to Dennan's Row,
 A child might scatheless stroke his brow."—

V.

NORMAN.

"That bull was slain: his reeking hide
 They stretch'd the cataract beside,

* See Note 29.

† See Note 30.

Whose waters their wild tumult toss
 Adown the black and craggy boss
 Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
 Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.
 Couch'd on a shelf beneath its brink,
 Close where the thundering torrents sink,
 Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
 And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
 Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
 The wizard waits prophetic dream.
 Nor distant rests the chief;— but hush!
 See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
 The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
 To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
 Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
 That hovers o'er a slaughter'd host?
 Or raven on the blasted oak,
 That, watching while the deer is broke,*
 His morsel claims with sullen croak?" †

MALISE.

—"Peace! peace! to other than to me,
 Thy words were evil augury:
 But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
 Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
 Not ought that, glean'd from heaven or hell,
 Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell.
 The chieftain joins him, see—and now,
 Together they descend the brow."

VI.

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
 The Hermit Monk held solemn word:—
 "Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
 For man endow'd with mortal life,
 Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
 Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
 Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
 Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—
 'Tis hard for such to view, unfurl'd,
 The curtain of the future world.
 Yet, witness every quaking limb,
 My sunken pulse, my eyeballs dim,
 My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
 This for my Chieftain have I borne!—
 The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
 A human tongue may ne'er avouch;
 No mortal man,—save he, who, bred
 Between the living and the dead,

* Cut up.

† See Note 31.

Is gifted beyond nature's law,—
 Had e'er survived to say he saw.
 At length the fatal answer came,
 In characters of living flame!
 Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
 But borne and branded on my soul;—
 WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
 THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.”—

VII.

“Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
 Good is thine augury, and fair.
 Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
 But first our broadswords tasted blood.
 A surer victim still I know,
 Self-offer'd to the auspicious blow:
 A spy has sought my land this morn,—
 No eye shall witness his return!
 My followers guard each pass's mouth,
 To east, to westward, and to south;
 Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
 Has charge to lead his steps aside,
 Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
 He light on those shall bring him down.
 —But see, who comes his news to show!
 Malise! what tidings of the foe?”

VIII.

“At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive
 Two Barons proud their banners wave.
 I saw the Moray's silver star,
 And mark'd the sable pale of Mar.”—
 “By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
 I love to hear of worthy foes.
 When move they on?”—“To-morrow's noon
 Will see them here for battle boune.”—
 “Then shall it see a meeting stern!—
 But, for the place—say, couldst thou learn
 Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?
 Strengthened by them, we well might bide
 The battle on Benledi's side.
 Thou couldst not?—well! Clan Alpine's men
 Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
 Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
 All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
 Each for his hearth and household fire,
 Father for child, and son for sire,—
 Lover for maid beloved!—But why—
 Is it the breeze affects mine eye?

Or dost thou come, ill-omen'd tear!
 A messenger of doubt or fear?
 No! sooner may the Saxon lance
 Unfix Benledi from his stance,
 Than doubt or terror can pierce through
 The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!
 'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.—
 Each to his post—all know their charge.”
 The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
 The broadswords gleam, the banners dance,
 Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.
 —I turn me from the martial roar,
 And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
 And Ellen sits on the grey stone
 Fast by the cave, and makes her moan;
 While vainly Allan's words of cheer
 Are pour'd on her unheeding ear.—
 He will return—Dear lady, trust!—
 With joy return;—he will—he must.
 Well was it time to seek afar,
 Some refuge from impending war,
 When e'en Olan-Alpine's rugged swarm
 Are cow'd by the approaching storm.
 I saw their boats with many a light,
 Floating the livelong yesternight,
 Shifting like flashes darted forth
 By the red streamers of the north;
 I mark'd at morn how close they ride,
 Thick moor'd by the lone islet's side,
 Like wild ducks couching in the fen,
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
 Since this rude race dare not abide
 The peril on the mainland side,
 Shall not thy noble father's care
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare?”

X.

ELLEN.

“No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,
 Douglas a parting blessing gave,
 The tear that glisten'd in his eye
 Drown'd not his purpose fix'd on high.
 My soul, though feminine and weak,
 Can image his; e'en as the lake,

Itself disturb'd by slightest stroke,
 Reflects the invulnerable rock.
 He hears report of battle rife,
 He deems himself the cause of strife.
 I saw him redden, when the theme
 Turn'd Allan, on thine idle dream
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
 Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
 Think'st thou he trow'd thine omen aught?
 Oh no! 'twas apprehensive thought
 For the kind youth,—for Roderick too—
 (Let me be just) that friend so true;
 In danger both, and in our cause!
 Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
 Why else that solemn warning given,
 'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!'—
 Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
 If e'er return him not again,
 Am I to hie, and make me known?
 Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
 Buys his friend's safety with his own;—
 He goes to do—what I had done,
 Had Douglas' daughter been his son!"

XI.

"Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
 If aught should his return delay,
 He only named you holy fane
 As fitting place to meet again.
 Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,—
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!—
 My vision'd sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.
 When did my gifted dream beguile?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow,
 That presaged this approaching woe!
 Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.
 Would we had left this dismal spot!
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
 Of such a wondrous tale I know—
 Dear lady change that look of woe,
 My harp was wont thy grief to cheer."—

ELLEN.

"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
 But cannot stop the bursting tear."
 The Minstrel tried his simple art,
 But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.

Ballad.

ALICE BRAND.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
 When the mavis* and merlet† are singing,
 When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
 And the hunter's horn is ringing.

"O Alice Brand, my native land
 Is lost for love of you;
 And we must hold by wood and wold,
 As outlaws wont to do.

"O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
 And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
 That on the night of our luckless flight,
 Thy brother bold I slew.

"Now must I teach to hew the beech,
 The hand that held the glaive,
 For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
 And stakes to fence our cave.

"And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
 That wont on harp to stray,
 A cloak must sheer from the slaughter'd deer,
 To keep the cold away."—

"O Richard! if my brother died,
 'Twas but a fatal chance;
 For darkling was the battle tried,
 And fortune sped the lance.

"If pall and vair no more I wear,
 Nor thou the crimson sheen,
 As warm, we'll say, is the russet grey,
 As gay the forest-green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
 And lost thy native land,
 Still Alice has her own Richard,
 And he his Alice Brand."

XIII.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
 So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
 On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
 Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

* Thrush.

† Blackbird.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
 Who wonn'd within the hill,—
 Like wind in the porch of a ruin'd church,
 His voice was ghostly shrill.
 "Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
 Our moonlight circle's screen?
 Or who comes here to chase the deer,
 Beloved of our Elfin Queen? *
 Or who may dare on wold to wear
 The fairies' fatal green?
 "Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
 For thou wert christen'd man;
 For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
 For mutter'd word or ban.
 "Lay on him the curse of the wither'd heart,
 The curse of the sleepless eye;
 Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
 Nor yet find leave to die."

XIV.

Ballad continued.

"Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
 Though the birds have still'd their singing;
 The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
 And Richard is fagots bringing.
 Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
 Before Lord Richard stands,
 And, as he cross'd and bless'd himself,
 "I fear not sign," quoth the grisly elf,
 "That is made with bloody hands."
 But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
 That woman void of fear,—
 "And if there's blood upon his hand,
 'Tis but the blood of deer."—
 "Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
 It cleaves unto his hand,
 The stain of thine own kindly blood,
 The blood of Ethert Brand."
 Then forward stepp'd she, Alice Brand,
 And made the holy sign,—
 "And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
 A spotless hand is mine.
 "And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
 By him whom Demons fear,
 To show us whence thou art thyself,
 And what thine errand here?"

* See Note 32.

XV.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land,
 When Fairy birds are singing,
 When the court doth ride by their monarch's side,
 With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gaily shines the Fairy-land—
 But all is glistening show,*
 Like the idle gleam that December's beam
 Can dart on ice and snow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
 Is our inconstant shape,
 Who now like knight and lady seem,
 And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
 When the Fairy King has power,
 That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
 And 'twixt life and death, was snatch'd away
 To the joyless Elfin bower.†

"But wist I of a woman bold,
 Who thrice my brow durst sign,
 I might regain my mortal mold,
 As fair a form as thine."

She cross'd him once—she cross'd him twice—
 That lady was so brave;
 The fouler grew his goblin hue,
 The darker grew the cave.

She cross'd him thrice, that lady bold;
 He rose beneath her hand
 The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
 Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
 When the navis and merle are singing,
 But merrier were they in Dunfermline grey,
 When all the bells were ringing. ‡

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were staid,
 A stranger climb'd the steepy glade;
 His martial step, his stately mien,
 His hunting suit of Lincoln green,

* See Note 33.

† See Note 34.

‡ This little fairy tale is founded upon a very curious Danish ballad, which occurs in the *Kæmpe Viser*, a collection of heroic songs, first published in 1591, and reprinted in 1695, inscribed by Anders Sørensen, the collector and editor, to Sophia, Queen of Denmark.

His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
 'Tis Snowdoun's Knight—'tis James Fitz-James
 Ellen beheld as in a dream,
 Then, starting, scarce suppress'd a scream:
 "O, stranger! in such hour of fear,
 What evil hap has brought thee here?"—
 "An evil hap how can it be,
 That bids me look again on thee?
 By promise bound, my former guide
 Met me betimes this morning tide,
 And marshall'd, over bank and bourne,
 The happy path of my return."—
 "The happy path!—what! said he nought
 Of war, of battle to be fought,
 Of guarded pass?"—"No, by my faith!
 Nor saw I ought could augur scathe."—
 "O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
 —Yonder his tartans I discern;
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
 That he will guide the stranger sure!—
 What prompted thee, unhappy man?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed by love or fear,
 Unknown to him to guide thee here."—

XVII.

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath,
 When love or honour's weigh'd with death.
 Then let me profit by my chance,
 And speak my purpose bold at once.
 I come to bear thee from a wild,
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled;
 By this soft hand to lead thee far
 From frantic scenes of feud and war.
 Near Bochastle my horses wait;
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower."—
 "O! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art,
 To say I do not read thy heart;
 Too much, before, my selfish ear
 Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
 That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
 In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track;
 And how, O how can I atone
 The wreck my vanity brought on!—
 One way remains—I'll tell him all—
 Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!

Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
 Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
 But first—my father is a man
 Outlaw'd and exil'd under ban;
 The price of blood is on his head,
 With me 'twere infamy to wed.—
 Still would'st thou speak?—then hear the truth!
 Fitz-James, there is a noble youth,—
 If yet he is!—exposed for me
 And mine to dread extremity—
 Thou hast the secret of my heart;
 Forgive, be generous, and depart!”

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
 A lady's fickle heart to gain,
 But here he knew and felt them vain.
 There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
 To give her steadfast speech the lie;
 In maiden confidence she stood,
 Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
 And told her love with such a sigh
 Of deep and hopeless agony,
 As death had seal'd her Malcolm's doom,
 And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
 Hope vanish'd from Fitz-James's eye,
 But not with hope fled sympathy.
 He proffer'd to attend her side,
 As brother would a sister guide.—
 “O! little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
 Safer for both we go apart.
 O haste thee, and from Allan learn,
 If thou mayst trust yon wily kern.”
 With hand upon his forehead laid,
 The conflict of his mind to shade,
 A parting step or two he made;
 Then, as some thought had cross'd his brain,
 He paus'd, and turn'd, and came again.

XIX.

“Hear, lady, yet, a parting word!
 It chanced in fight that my poor sword
 Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
 This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
 And bade, when I had boon to crave,
 To bring it back, and boldly claim
 The recompense that I would name.
 Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
 But one who lives by lance and sword,

Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the king without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way;
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me.”
He placed the golden circlet on,
Paused—kiss'd her hand—and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He join'd his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way,
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whoop'd loud and high—
“Murdoch! was that a signal cry?”—
He stammer'd forth—“I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare.”
He look'd—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed:—“Ah! gallant grey!
For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well
We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.—
Murdoch, move first—but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!”
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,
When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tatter'd weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seem'd nought to mark, yet all to spy,
Her brow was wreath'd with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she wav'd a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;

Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
 Where scarce was footing for the goat.
 The tartan plaid she first descried,
 And shriek'd till all the rocks replied;
 As loud she laugh'd when near they drew,
 For then the Lowland garb she knew;
 And then her hands she wildly wrung,
 And then she wept, and then she sung—
 She sung!—the voice, in better time,
 Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
 And now, though strain'd and roughen'd, still
 Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

Song.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
 They say my brain is warp'd and wrung—
 I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
 I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
 But were I now where Allan glides,
 Or heard my native Devon's tides,
 So sweetly would I rest and pray
 That Heaven would close my wintry day!
 'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
 They made me to the church repair;
 It was my bridal morn, they said,
 And my true love would meet me there.
 But woe betide the cruel guile,
 That drown'd in blood the morning smile!
 And woe betide the fairy dream!
 I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII.

"Who is this maid? what means her lay?
 She hovers o'er the hollow way,
 And flutters wide her mantle grey,
 As the lone heron spreads his wing,
 By twilight, o'er a haunted spring."
 "'Tis Blanche of Devon," Murdoch said,
 "A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
 Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
 When Roderick foray'd Devon-side.
 The gay bridegroom resistance made,
 And felt our Chief's unconquer'd blade.
 I marvel she is now at large,
 But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.—
 Hence, brain-sick fool!"—He raised his bow:—
 "Now, if thou strikest her but one blow,

I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
 As ever peasant pitch'd a bar!"—
 "Thanks, champion, thanks!" the Maniac cried,
 And press'd her to Fitz-James's side.
 "See the grey pennons I prepare,
 To seek my true-love through the air!
 I will not lend that savage groom,
 To break his fall, one downy plume!
 No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
 The wolves shall batten on his bones,
 And then shall his detested plaid,
 By bush and brier in mid air staid,
 Wave forth a banner fair and free,
 Meet signal for their revelry."—

XXIV.

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"—
 "O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.—
 Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
 But still it loves the Lincoln green;
 And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
 Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.
 "For O my sweet William was forester true,
 He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
 His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
 And so blithely he trill'd the Lowland lay!

"It was not that I meant to tell . . .
 But thou art wise, and guessest well."
 Then, in a low and broken tone,
 And hurried note, the song went on.
 Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
 She fix'd her apprehensive eye;
 Then turn'd it on the Knight, and then
 Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

"The toils are pitch'd, and the stakes are set,
 Ever sing merrily, merrily;
 The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
 Hunters live so cheerily.

"It was a stag, a stag of ten,*
 Bearing its branches sturdily;
 He came stately down the glen,
 Ever sing hardily, hardily.

"It was there he met with a wounded doe,
 She was bleeding deathfully;
 She warn'd him of the toils below,
 O, so faithfully, faithfully!

* Ten branches on his antlers,

“He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot and he could speed—
Hunters watch so narrowly.”

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was passion-toss'd,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.—
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
“Disclose thy treachery, or die!”
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrill'd in Blanche's faded breast,—
Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need!
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life!
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couch'd upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach!—it may not be—
Thine ambush'd kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
—Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die;
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft
And gaz'd on it, and feebly laugh'd;
Her wreath of broom and feathers grey
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried.—
“Stranger, it is in vain!” she cried.
“This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;

For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.—
Seest thou this tress?—O! still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimm'd its shine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head—
My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.—
I waver still.—O God! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light!—
O! by thy knighthood's honour'd sign,
And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devon's wrong!
They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell."

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
Fast pour'd his eyes at pity's claims,
And now with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murder'd maid expire.
"God, in my need, be my relief,
As I wreak this on yonder Chief!"
A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side:
"By Him whose word is truth! I swear,
No other favour will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
—But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
The chase is up,—but they shall know,
The stag at bay's a dangerous foe."
Barr'd from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,

And oft must change his desperate track,
 By stream and precipice turn'd back.
 Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
 From lack of food and loss of strength,
 He couch'd him in a thicket hoar,
 And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
 "Of all my rash adventures past,
 This frantic feat must prove the last!
 Who e'er so mad but might have guess'd,
 That all this Highland hornet's nest
 Would muster up in swarms so soon
 As e'er they heard of bands at Doune!—
 Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
 Hark to the whistle and the shout!—
 If further through the wilds I go,
 I only fall upon the foe:
 I'll couch me here to evening grey,
 Then darkling try my dangerous way."

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
 The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
 The owl awakens from her dell,
 The fox is heard upon the fell;
 Enough remains of glimmering light
 To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
 Yet not enough from far to show
 His figure to the watchful foe.
 With cautious step, and ear awake,
 He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
 And not the summer solstice, there,
 Temper'd the midnight mountain air,
 But every breeze that swept the wold,
 Benum'd his drenched limbs with cold.
 In dread, in danger, and alone,
 Famish'd and chill'd, through ways unknown,
 Tangled and steep, he journey'd on;
 Till, as a rock's huge point he turn'd,
 A watch-fire close before him burn'd.

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear,
 Bask'd, in his plaid, a mountaineer;
 And up he sprung with sword in hand,—
 "Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!"
 "A stranger." "What dost thou require?"
 "Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
 My life's beset, my path is lost,
 The gale has chill'd my limbs with frost."

"Art thou a friend to Roderick?" "No."
 "Thou darest not call thyself a foe?"
 "I dare! to him, and all the band
 He brings to aid his murderous hand."
 "Bold words!—but, though the beast of game
 The privilege of chase may claim, *
 Though space and law the stag we lend
 Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,
 Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,
 The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain?
 Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they lie,
 Who say thou camest a secret spy!"
 "They do, by heaven!—Come Roderick Dhu,
 And of his clan the boldest two,
 And let me but till morning rest,
 I write the falsehood on their crest."
 "If by the blaze I mark aright,
 Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight."
 "Then by these tokens may'st thou know
 Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."—
 "Enough, enough; sit down and share
 A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

XXXI.

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
 The harden'd flesh of mountain deer; †
 Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
 And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
 He tended him like welcome guest,
 Then thus his further speech address'd:—
 "Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
 A clansman born, a kinsman true;
 Each word against his honour spoke,
 Demands of me avenging stroke;
 Yet more,—upon thy fate, 'tis said,
 A mighty augury is laid.
 It rests with me to wind my horn,—
 Thou art with numbers overborne;
 It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
 Worn as thou art, to bid the stand:
 But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
 Will I depart from honour's laws;
 To assail a wearied man were shame,
 And stranger is a holy name;

* This incident, like some other passages in the poem, illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but borrowed from fact. The Highlanders, with the inconsistency of most nations in the same state, were alternately capable of great exertions of generosity, and of cruel revenge and perfidy.

† See Note 35.

Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
 In vain he never must require.
 Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
 Myself will guide thee on the way,
 O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
 Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
 As far as Coilantogle's ford;
 From thence thy warrant is thy sword."
 "I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
 As freely as 'tis nobly given!"
 "Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
 Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
 With that he shook the gather'd heath,
 And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
 And the brave foemen, side by side,
 Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
 And slept until the dawning beam
 Purpled the mountain and the stream.

NOTE.—Loch-Katrine, pronounced "Ketturin" by the Celts, may have been so named from the "Catterins," or robber clans, who found shelter near its shores.

Ben-Ledi, "The Hill of God," the rites of Baal being held on its summit, is 2882 feet high; northward of Loch-Vennachar, westward of Loch-Lubnaig, and eastward of Loch-Katrine.

Ben-Aan is 1800 feet, and above "The Trossachs' shaggy glen."

Ben-Venue, 2386 feet, "The Little Mountain," is so, compared with Ben-Ledi; on the N.E. is Ben-Lomond, 3192. Ben-Venue has Loch-Katrine on the N., Loch-Ard on the S., Loch-Chon on the W., and all are near its base.

Loch-Katrine is, by coach road, about 10 miles west of the railway station at Callender. It is about 10 miles in length, and from Stron-a-Clachar Pier, near Glengyle, to the pier of Inversnaid, on Loch-Lomond, is within 5 miles.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Combat.

I.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
 When first, by the bewilder'd pilgrim spied,
 It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
 And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
 And lights the fearful path on mountain side;—
 Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
 Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
 Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
 Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of War.

II.

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
 Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
 When, rousing at its glimmer red,
 The warriors left their lowly bed,
 Look'd out upon the dappled sky,
 Mutter'd their soldier matins by,
 And then awaked their fire, to steal,
 As short and rude, their soldier meal.
 That o'er the Gael* around him threw
 His graceful plaid of varied hue,
 And, true to promise, led the way,
 By thicket green and mountain grey,
 A wildering path!—they winded now
 Along the precipice's brow,
 Commanding the rich scenes beneath.
 The windings of the Forth and Teith,
 And all the vales between that lie,
 Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
 Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
 Gain'd not the length of horseman's lance.
 'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
 Assistance from the hand to gain;
 So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
 Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
 That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
 It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III.

At length they came where, stern and steep,
 The hill sinks down upon the deep.
 Here Vennachar in silver flows,
 There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
 Ever the holly path twined on,
 Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
 An hundred men might hold the post
 With hardihood against a host.
 The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
 Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
 With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
 And patches bright of bracken green,
 And heather black, that waved so high,
 It held the copse in rivalry.
 But where the lake slept deep and still,
 Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
 And oft both path and hill were torn,
 Where wintry torrents down had borne,

* The Highlander calls himself *Gael*, and the Lowlanders he calls *Sassenach*.

And heap'd upon the cumber'd land
 Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
 So toilsome was the road to trace,
 The guide, abating of his pace,
 Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
 And ask'd Fitz-James, by what strange cause
 He sought these wilds? traversed by few,
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV.

"Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
 Hangs in my belt, and by my side;
 Yet, sooth to tell," the Saxon said,
 "I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
 When here, but three days since I came,
 Bewilder'd in pursuit of game,
 All seem'd as peaceful and as still,
 As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
 Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
 Nor soon expected back from war.
 Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
 Though deep perchance the villain lied."
 "Yet why a second venture try?"
 "A warrior thou, and ask me why!—
 Moves our free course by such fix'd cause,
 As gives the poor mechanic laws?
 Enough, I sought to drive away
 The lazy hours of peaceful day;
 Slight cause will then suffice to guide
 A Knight's free footsteps far and wide,—
 A falcon flown, a greyhound stray'd,
 The merry glance of mountain maid:
 Or, if a path be dangerous known,
 The danger's self is lure alone."

V.

"Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
 Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
 Say, heard ye nought of Lowland war,
 Against Clan-Alpine, rais'd by Mar?"
 —"No, by my word;—of bands prepared
 To guard King James's sports I heard;
 Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
 This muster of the mountaineer,
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,
 Which else in Doune had peaceful hung."—
 "Free be they flung! for we were loth
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.
 Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
 Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.

But, Stranger, peaceful since you came,
Bewilder'd in the mountain-game,
Whence the bold boast by which you show
Vich-Alpine's vow'd and mortal foe?"—
"Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew
Nought of my Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlaw'd desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabb'd a knight:
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and manly heart."

VI.

Wrothful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lower'd the clansman's sable scowl.
A space he paused, then sternly said,
"And heard'st thou why he drew his blade?
Heard'st thou, that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What reck'd the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath, or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven."—
"Still was it outrage; yet, 'tis true,
Not then claim'd sovereignty his due;
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrow'd truncheon of command,
The young King, mew'd in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.*
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean pray by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruin'd Lowland swain
His herds and harvest rear'd in vain.—
Methinks a soul, like thine, should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answer'd with disdainful smile,—
"Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I mark'd thee send delighted eye,
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;

* See Note 36.

The stranger came with iron hand,
 And from our fathers reft the land.
 Where dwell we now! See, rudely swell
 Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
 Ask we this savage hill we tread,
 For fatten'd steer or household bread;
 Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
 And well the mountain might reply,—
 'To you, as to your sires of yore,
 Belong the target and claymore!
 I give you shelter in my breast,
 Your own good blades must win the rest.'
 Pent in this fortress of the North,
 Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
 To spoil the spoiler as we may,
 And from the robber rend the prey?
 Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
 The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
 While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
 But one along yon river's maze,—
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,
 Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.*
 Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
 That plundering Lowland field and fold
 Is aught but retribution true?
 Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."—

VIII.

Answer'd Fitz-James,—“And, if I sought,
 Think'st thou no other could be brought?
 What deem ye of my path waylaid?
 My life given o'er to ambuscade?”—
 “As of a meed to rashness due;
 Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
 I seek my hound, or falcon stray'd,
 I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
 Free hadst thou been to come and go;
 But secret path marks secret foe.
 Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
 Hadst thou, unheard, been doom'd to die,
 Save to fulfil an augury.”—
 “Well, let it pass; nor will I now
 Fresh cause of enmity avow,
 To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
 Enough, I am by promise tied
 To match me with this man of pride:
 Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
 In peace; but when I come again,

* See Note 37.

I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!"

IX.

"Have, then, thy wish!" he whistled shrill,
And he was answer'd from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows,
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior arm'd for strife.
That whistle garrison'd the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood, and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James—"How say'st thou now?"
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!"

X.

Fitz-James was brave:—Though to his heart
The life-blood thrill'd with sudden start,
He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
Return'd the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:—
"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."

Sir Roderick mark'd—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood—then waved his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seem'd as if their mother Earth
Had swallow'd up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had toss'd in air,
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun's last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected shone
On bracken green, and cold grey stone.

XI.

Fitz-James look'd round—yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the chief replied,
“Fear nought—nay, that I need not say—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest;—I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on;—I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.”
They moved:—I said Fitz-James was brave,
As ever knight that belted glaive;
Yet dare not say, that now his blood
Kept on its wont and temper'd flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
With lances, that, to take his life,

Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonour'd and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanish'd guardians of the ground,
And still, from copse and heather deep,
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain,
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reach'd that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.
And here his course the Chieftain staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said—
"Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand:*
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

XIII.

The Saxon paused:—"I ne'er delay'd,
When foeman bade me draw my blade;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death:
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?"—"No, Stranger, none!

* See Note 38.

And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,
 The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
 For thus spoke Fate, by prophet bred
 Between the living and the dead;
 ‘Who spills the foremost foeman’s life,
 His party conquers in the strife.’”
 “Then, by my word, the Saxon said,
 The riddle is already read.
 Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
 There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
 Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy,
 Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
 To James, at Stirling, let us go,
 When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
 Or if the King shall not agree
 To grant thee grace and favour free,
 I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
 That, to thy native strengths restored,
 With each advantage shalt thou stand,
 That aids thee now to guard thy land.”

XIV.

Dark lightning flash’d from Roderick’s eye—
 “Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
 Because a wretched kern ye slew,
 Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
 He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
 Thou add’st but fuel to my hate:—
 My clansman’s blood demands revenge,
 Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change
 My thought, and hold thy valour light
 As that of some vain carpet knight,
 Who ill deserved my courteous care,
 And whose best boast is but to wear
 A braid of his fair lady’s hair.”—
 “I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
 It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
 For I have sworn this braid to stain
 In the best blood that warms thy vein.
 Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone!—
 Yet think not that by thee alone,
 Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
 Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
 Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
 Of this small horn one feeble blast
 Would fearful odds against thee cast.
 But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
 We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.”
 Then each at once his falchion drew,
 Each on the ground his scabbard threw,

Each look'd to sun, and stream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,*
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dash'd aside;
For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.†
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintain'd unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And shower'd his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foil'd his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forc'd Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

"Now, yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"—
Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die."
—Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;‡
Receiv'd, but reck'd not of a wound,
And lock'd his arms his foeman round.—
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel,
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.

* See Note 39.

† See Note 40.

‡ See Note 41.

The Chieftain's gripe his throat compress'd,
His knee was planted on his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright!—
—But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;
For, while the dagger gleam'd on high,
Reel'd soul and sense, reel'd brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII.

He falter'd thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeem'd, unhop'd, from desperate strife;
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appear'd his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipp'd the braid,—
“Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid:
Yet with thy foe must die or live,
The praise that faith and valour give.”
With that he blew a bugle note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
By loosen'd rein, a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,—
With wonder view'd the bloody spot—
—“Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.

The sun rides high;—I must be boune,
To see the archer game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII.

“Stand, Bayard, stand!”—the steed obey’d,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreath’d his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turn’d on the horse his armed heel,
And stirr’d his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sate erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launch’d, along the plain they go.
They dash’d that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie’s hill they flew;
Still at the gallop prick’d the Knight,
His merry-men follow’d as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the banner’d towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers’ sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,
With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look’d down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strain’d,
Sudden his steed the leader rein’d;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—
“Seest thou De Vaux, yon woodsman grey,

And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banish'd man,
There thought upon their own grey tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power
And deem'd themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their chequer'd bands the joyous route.
Their morricers, with bell at heel,
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marion, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
His first shaft centred in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watch'd, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy,—
No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,
Nor call'd in vain; for Douglas came.
—For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppress'd;
Indignant then he turn'd him where
Their arms the brawny yemen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.

When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky,
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The grey-hair'd sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud appluses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
The King, with look unmov'd, bestow'd
A purse well fill'd with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
And sharper glance, the dark grey man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong;
The old men mark'd and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And wink'd aside, and told each son,
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women prais'd his stately form,
Though wreck'd by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmurs rose to clamours loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King,
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or call'd the banish'd man to mind;
No, not from those who, at the chase,
Once held his side the honour'd place,
Begirt his board, and, in the field,
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he, whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV.

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,

Whose pride the holiday to crown,
 Two favourite greyhounds should pull down,
 That venison free, and Bourdeaux wine,
 Might serve the archery to dine.
 But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
 Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
 The fleetest hound in all the North,—
 Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
 She left the royal hounds mid-way,
 And dashing on the antler'd prey,
 Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
 And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
 The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
 By strange intruder broken short,
 Came up, and with his leash unbound,
 In anger struck the noble hound.
 —The Douglas had endured, that morn,
 The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
 And last, and worst to spirit proud,
 Had borne the pity of the crowd;
 But Lufra had been fondly bred,
 To share his board, to watch his bed,
 And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck
 In maiden glee with garlands deck;
 They were such playmates, that with name
 Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
 His stifled wrath is brimming high,
 In darken'd brow and flashing eye;
 As waves before the bark divide,
 The crowd gave way before his stride;
 Needs but a buffet and no more,
 The groom lies senseless in his gore,
 Such blow no other hand could deal,
 Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamour'd loud the royal train,
 And brandish'd swords and staves amain,
 But stern the Baron's warning—"Back!
 Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
 Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
 King James! The Douglas, doom'd of old,
 And vainly sought for near and far,
 A victim to atone the war,
 A willing victim, now attends,
 Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."—
 "Thus is my clemency repaid?
 Presumptuous Lord!" the Monarch said;

"Of thy mis-proud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know:
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow, and haughty look?—
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.—
Break off the sports!"—for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows,—
"Break off the sports!" he said, and frown'd,
"And bid our horsemen clear the ground."

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marr'd the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen prick'd among the crowd,
Repell'd by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep;
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disorder'd roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said,—
"Sir John of Hyndford! 'twas my blade,
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed, permit me then
A word with these misguided men.

XXVIII.

"Hear, gentle friends! ere yet for me,
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honour, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind,
Which knit my country and my kind?

Oh no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should dread,
For me in kindred gore are red;
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me, that mother wails her son;
For me, that widow's mate expires;
For me, that orphans weep their sires;
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!"

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they pray'd
For blessings on his generous head,
Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men, upon the verge of life,
Bless'd him who stay'd the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattler's owed a sire;
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resign'd his honour'd charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
"O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud acclaim,
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
Strain'd for King James their morning note;
With like acclaim they hail'd the day,
When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!

Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fever'd blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king!

XXXI.

"But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—
What from our cousin, John of Mar?"
"He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground:
For some foul purpose yet unknown,—
Most sure for evil to the throne,—
The outlaw'd Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summon'd his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand array'd.
The Earl of Mar, this morn from Doune,
To break their muster march'd, and soon
Your grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride."

XXXII.

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,—
I should have earlier look'd to this:
I lost it in this bustling day.
—Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy need.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war:
Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
Was made our prisoner by a knight;
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost,
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco; fly!"
He turn'd his steed,— "My liege, I hie,—
Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
I fear the broadswords will be drawn."
The turf the flying courser spurn'd,
And to his towers the King return'd.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James' mood that day,
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismiss'd the courtly throng.
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the sadden'd town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumour'd feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms:—the Douglas too,
They mourn'd him pent within the hold,
"Where stout Earl William was of old."
And there his word the speaker staid,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen, from the west,
At evening to the Castle press'd;
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

NOTE.—The tourist from Stirling for Loch-Katrine, takes his route by railway through Bridge of Allan, "the spa" of central Scotland; thence for the ancient cathedral town of Dunblane, where carriages are changed, and the track runs westward by Doune, famous of old for its castle, which is still in fair preservation; but the village now mainly depends on its "trysts,"—markets for cattle, etc.,—with partial occupation at the cotton mills of Deanston. Keeping north of the rapid Teith, with the strath of the upper Forth beyond it, the crags of Callender soon come in view, the village is reached, the station left, and the coaches found in waiting for the Trosachs and Loch-Katrine. About a mile out of Callender, at the toll of Kilmahog, the coach-road for Lock-Earnhead, Killin, Kenmore, and Aberfeldy, leads off, and the track by Lochs Lubnaig, Voil, and the Braes of Balquidder, is that shadowed forth, as where of old gleamed the "Cross of Fire." The road direct from the Trosachs keeps above the Teith, Lochs Vennachar and Achray; with Ben-Ledi on the right, Ben-Venue ahead, Ben-Lomond in the distance, and the district of Menteith southward.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Guard-Room.

I.

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.
What various scenes, and, O! what scenes of woe,
Are witness'd by that red and struggling beam!
The fever'd patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds its stream;
The ruin'd maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;
The wakful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble wail.

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums, with rolling note, foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barr'd,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deaden'd the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And show'd wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deform'd with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fever'd with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drain'd, and cups o'erthrown,
Show'd in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some labour'd still their thirst to quench;

Some, chill'd with watching, spread their hands
 O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
 While round them or beside them flung,
 At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
 Like tenants of a feudal lord,
 Nor own'd the patriarchal claim
 Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
 Adventurers they,* from far who roved,
 To live by battle which they loved.
 There the Italian's clouded face,
 The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace;
 The mountain-loving Switzer there
 More freely breathed in mountain-air;
 The Fleming there despised the soil,
 That paid so ill the labourer's toil;
 Their rolls show'd French and German name;
 And merry England's exiles came,
 To share, with ill-conceal'd disdain,
 Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
 All brave in arms, well train'd to wield
 The heavy halberd, brand, and shield;
 In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
 In pillage fierce and uncontroll'd;
 And now, by holytide and feast,
 From rules of discipline released.

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
 Fought 'twixt Loch-Katrine and Achray.
 Fierce was their speech, and, 'mid their words,
 Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
 Nor sunk their tone to spate the ear
 Of wounded comrades groaning near,
 Whose mangled limbs, and bodies gored,
 Bore token of the mountain sword,
 Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,
 Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;
 Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
 And savage oath by fury spoke!—
 At length up-started John of Brent,
 A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
 A stranger to respect or fear,
 In peace a chaser of the deer,
 In host a hardy mutineer,
 But still the boldest of the crew,
 When deed of danger was to do.

* See Note 44.

He grieved, that day, their games cut short,
 And marr'd the dicer's brawling sport,
 And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
 And, while a merry catch I troll,
 Let each the buxom chorus bear,
 Like brethren of the brand and spear."

V.

Soldier's Song.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
 Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
 That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
 And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
 Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
 Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
 The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
 Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
 And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
 Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why should he not?
 For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
 And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
 Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
 Yet whoop, bully boys! off with your liquor,
 Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI.

The warder's challenge, heard without,
 Staid in mid-roar the merry shout.
 A soldier to the portal went,—
 "Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
 And,—beat for jubilee the drum!
 A maid and minstrel with him come."
 Bertram, a Fleming, grey and scarr'd,
 Was entering now the Court of Guard,
 A harper with him, and in plaid
 All muffled close, a mountain maid,
 Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view
 Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
 "What news?" they roar'd:—"I only know,
 From noon till eve we fought with foe,
 As wild and as untameable
 As the rude mountains where they dwell;
 On both sides store of blood is lost,
 Nor much success can either boast."—

"But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band."*

VII.

"No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm."
"Hear ye his boast?" cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
"Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepp'd between,
And dropp'd at once the tartan screen:—
So, from his morning cloud appears
The sun of May, through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abash'd and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

Boldly she spoke,—*"Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier's friend;
Cheer'd him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant, or the strong,
Should exile's daughter suffer wrong,"*—
Answer'd De Brent, most forward still
In every feat or good or ill,—
*"I shame me of the part I play'd:
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause,*

* See Note 45.

Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,—
“Must bear such age, I think, as thou.
Hear ye, my mates;—I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o’er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!—
Beware loose speech, or jesting rough:
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough.”

IX.

Their Captain came, a gallant young,—
(Of Tullibardine’s house he sprung,)
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humour light,
And, though by courtesy controll’d,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
And dauntless eye;—and yet, in sooth,
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen’s lovely face and mien.
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.
“Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion’s aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?
Does thy high quest a knight require,
Or may the venture suit a squire?”—
Her dark eye flash’d;—she paused and sigh’d,—
“O what have I to do with pride!—
—Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father’s life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James.”

X.

The signet-ring young Lewis took,
With deep respect and alter’d look;
And said,—“This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely veil’d,
Lady, in aught my folly fail’d.

Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
 The King shall know what suitor waits.
 Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
 Repose you till his waking hour;
 Female attendance shall obey
 Your hest, for service or array.
 Permit I marshal you the way."
 But, ere she follow'd, with the grace
 And open bounty of her race,
 She bade her slender purse be shared
 Among the soldiers of the guard.
 The rest with thanks their guerdon took;
 But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
 On the reluctant maiden's hold
 Forced bluntly back the proffer'd gold;—
 "Forgive a haughty English heart,
 And O forget its ruder part!
 The vacant purse shall be my share,
 Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
 Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
 Where gayer crests may keep afar."
 With thanks,—'twas all she could—the maid
 His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
 Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
 "My lady safe, O let your grace
 Give me to see my master's face!
 His minstrel I,—to share his doom
 Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
 Tenth in descent, since first my sires
 Waked for his noble house their lyres,
 Not one of all the race was known
 But prized its weal above their own.
 With the Chief's birth begins our care;
 Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
 Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
 His earliest feat of field or chase;
 In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
 We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
 Nor leave him till we pour our verse,—
 A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
 Then let me share his captive lot;
 It is my right—deny it not!"—
 "Little we reck," said John of Brent,
 "We Southern men, of long descent;
 Nor wot we how a name—a word—
 Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:

Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
God bless the house of Beaundesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer,
More than to guide the labouring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

XII.

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they pass'd, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters' din;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
And many a hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,
By artist form'd, who deem'd it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-brow'd porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward roll'd,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They enter'd:—'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Deck'd the sad walls and oaken floor;
Such as the rugged days of old
Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," said De Brent, "thou may'st remain
Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growl'd anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel look'd, and knew
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deem'd the Chief he sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prow
Shall never stem the billows more,

Deserted by her gallant band,
 Amid the breakers lies astrand,—
 So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!
 And oft his fever'd limbs he threw
 In toss abrupt, as when her sides
 Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
 That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
 Yet cannot heave her from the seat;—
 O! how unlike her course at sea!
 Or his free step on hill and lea!—
 Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
 —“What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
 My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all?
 Have they been ruin'd in my fall?
 Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here!
 Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear.”—
 (For Allan, who his mood well knew,
 Was choked with grief and terror too.)
 “Who fought—who fled?—Old man, be brief;—
 Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
 Who basely live!—who bravely died?”
 “O, calm thee, Chief!” the Minstrel cried,
 “Ellen is safe;”—“For that thank Heaven!”—
 And hopes are for the Douglas given;—
 The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
 And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,
 Has never harp of minstrel told,
 Of combat fought so true and bold.
 Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
 Though many a goodly bow is rent.’

XIV.

The Chieftain rear'd his form on high,
 And fever's fire was in his eye;
 But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
 Chequer'd his swarthy brow and cheeks.
 —“Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
 With measure bold, on festal day,
 In yon lone isle, . . . again where ne'er
 Shall harper play, or warrior hear! . . .
 That stirring air that peals on high,
 O'er Dermid's race our victory.—
 Strike it!—and then (for well thou canst),
 Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
 Fling me the picture of the fight,
 When met my clan the Saxon might.
 I'll listen, till my fancy hears
 The clang of swords, the crash of spears!

These grates, these walls, shall vanish then,
 For the fair field of fighting men,
 And my free spirit burst away,
 As if it soar'd from battle fray."
 The trembling Bard with awe obey'd,—
 Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
 But soon remembrance of the sight
 He witness'd from the mountain's height,
 With what old Bertram told at night,
 Awaken'd the full power of song,
 And bore him in career along;—
 As shallop launch'd on river's tide,
 That slow and fearful leaves the side,
 But when it feels the middle stream,
 Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV.

*Battle of Beal' an Quine.**

"The Minstrel came once more to view
 The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
 For ere he parted, he would say
 Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
 Where shall he find, in foreign land,
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—
 There is no breeze upon the fern,
 Nor ripple on the lake,
 Upon her eyry nods the erne,
 The deer has sought the brake;
 The small birds will not sing aloud,
 The springing trout lies still,
 So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
 Benledi's distant hill.
 Is it the thunder's solemn sound
 That mutters deep and dread,
 Or echoes from the groaning ground
 The warrior's measured tread?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance
 The sun's retiring beams?
 —I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
 I see the Moray's silver star,
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
 That up the lake comes winding far!
 To hero bound for battle-strife,
 Or bard of martial lay,
 'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
 One glance at their array!

* See Note 46.

XVI.

"Their light-arm'd archers far and near
 Survey'd the tangled ground,
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
 A twilight forest frown'd,
 Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
 The stern battalia crown'd.
 No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
 Still were the pipe and drum;
 Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
 The sullen march was dumb.
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake
 Or wave their flags abroad;
 Scarce the frail aspen seem'd to quake,
 That shadow'd o'er their road.
 Their vanward scouts no tidings bring,
 Can rouse no lurking foe,
 Nor spy a trace of living thing,
 Save when they stirr'd the roe;
 The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
 Where rise no rocks its power to braye,
 High-swelling, dark, and slow.
 The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
 A narrow and a broken plain,
 Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
 And here the horse and spearmen pause,
 While, to explore the dangerous glen,
 Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII.

"At once there rose so wild a yell
 Within that dark and narrow dell,
 As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
 Had peal'd the banner-cry of hell!
 Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
 Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
 The archery appear:
 For life! for life! their plight they ply—
 And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
 And plaids and bonnets waving high,
 And broadswords flashing to the sky,
 Are maddening in the rear.
 Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
 Pursuers and pursued;
 Before that tide of flight and chase,
 How shall it keep its rooted place,
 The spearmen's twilight wood?
 'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!
 Bear back both friend and foe!'

Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
 That serried grove of lances brown
 At once lay levell'd-low;
 And closely shouldering side to side,
 The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
 'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
 As their Tinchel* crows the game!
 They come as fleet as forest deer,
 We'll drive them back as tame.'—

XVIII.

"Bearing before them, in their course,
 The relics of the archer force,
 Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
 Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
 Above the tide, each broadsword bright
 Was brandishing like beam of light,
 Each targe was dark below;
 And with the ocean's mighty swing,
 When heaving to the tempest's wing,
 They hurl'd them on the foe.
 I heard the lance's shivering crash,
 As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
 I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
 As if an hundred anvils rang!
 But Moray wheel'd his rearward rank
 Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,
 —'My banner-man, advance!
 I see,' he cried, 'their column shake.—
 Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
 Upon them with the lance!'—
 The horsemen dash'd among the rout,
 As deer break through the broom;
 Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
 They soon make lightsome room.
 Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
 Where, where was Roderick then!
 One blast upon his bugle-horn
 Were worth a thousand men.
 And reffluent through the pass of fear
 The battle's tide was pour'd;
 Vanish'd the Saxon's struggling spear,
 Vanish'd the mountain-sword.
 As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
 Receives her roaring linn,
 As the dark caverns of the deep
 Suck the wild whirlpool in,

* A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding, and gradually narrowing, brought the deer together, which made desperate efforts to break through the *Tinchel*.

So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass:
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX.

"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within,
—Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on: its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.—
Grey Benvenue I soon repass'd,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain-glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side;
While by the lake below appears
The dark'ning cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shatter'd band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tatter'd sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Mark'd the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

"Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxon stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried—'Behold yon isle!—

See! none are left to guard its strand,
 But women weak, that wring the hand:
 'Tis there of yore the robber band
 There booty wont to pile;—
 My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
 To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
 And loose a shallop from the shore.
 Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
 Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.'
 Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
 On earth his casque and corslet rung,
 He plunged him in the wave:—
 All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
 And to their clamours Benvenue
 A mingled echo gave;
 The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
 The helpless females scream for fear,
 And yells for rage the mountaineer.
 'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
 Pour'd down at once the lowering heaven;
 A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
 Her billows rear'd their snowy crest.
 Well for the swimmer swell'd they high,
 To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
 For round him shower'd, 'mid rain and hail,
 The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—
 In vain—He nears the isle—and lo!
 His hand is on a shallop's bow.
 —Just then a flash of lightning came,
 It tinged the waves and strand with flame:—
 I mark'd Duncraggan's widow'd dame,
 Behind an oak I saw her stand,
 A native dirk gleam'd in her hand:—
 It darken'd,—but amid the moan
 Of waves, I heard a dying groan;—
 Another flash!—the spearman floats
 A weltering corse beside the boats,
 And the stern matron o'er him stood,
 Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

" 'Revenge! revenge!' the Saxons cried,
 The Gael's exulting shout replied.
 Despite the elemental rage,
 Again they hurried to engage;
 But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
 Bloody with spurring came a knight,
 Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
 Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.

Clarion and trumpet by his side
 Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
 While, in the Monarch's name afar
 An herald's voice forbade the war,
 For Bothwell's lord, and Roderick bold,
 Were both, he said, in captive hold."
 —But here the lay made sudden stand,
 The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!—
 Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
 How Roderick brook'd his minstrelsy:
 At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
 With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
 That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
 Varied his look as changed the song;
 At length, no more his deafen'd ear
 The minstrel melody can hear;
 His face grows sharp,—his hands are clench'd,
 As if some pang his heart-strings wrench'd;
 Set are his teeth, his fading eye
 Is sternly fix'd on vacancy;
 Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
 His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu!—
 Old Allan-Bane look'd on aghast,
 While grim and still his spirit pass'd;
 But when he saw that life was fled,
 He pour'd his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII.

Lament.

"And art thou cold and lowly laid,
 Thy foemen's dread, thy people's aid,
 Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade!
 For thee shall none a requiem say?—
 For thee,—who loved the minstrel's lay,
 For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
 The shelter of her exiled line,
 E'en in this prison-house of thine,
 I'll wail for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
 What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
 What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
 When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
 Thy fall before the race was won,
 Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
 There breathes not clansman of thy line,
 But would have given his life for thine.—
 O woe for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prison'd eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with me,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honour'd Pine."

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remain'd in lordly bower apart,
Where play'd, with many-colour'd gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lighten'd up a tapestried wall.
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or, if she look'd, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawn'd the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claim'd with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betray'd,—
Those who such simple joys have known,
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour!
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV.

Song of the Imprisoned Huntsman.

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,

My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.
I wish I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green,
With bended bough and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.
I hate to learn the ebb of time,
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.
No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee,—
That life is lost to love and me!"

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The list'ner had not turn'd her head,
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdown's graceful Knight was near.
She turn'd the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.
"O welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she said;
"How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt"——"O say not so!
'To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come! 'tis more than time,
He holds his court at morning prime."
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whisper'd hope and cheer;

Her faltering steps half led, half staid,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glow'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue, fancy frames
Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought, who own'd this state,
The dreaded prince whose will was fate!—
She gazed on many a princely port,
Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,—
Then turn'd bewilder'd and amazed,
For all stood bare; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent;
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring,—
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King.*

XXVII.

As wreath of snow, on mountain-breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She show'd the ring—she clasp'd her hands.
O! not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her,—and, the while,
Check'd with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kiss'd,
And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:—

* See Note 47.

“Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask nought for Douglas;—yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven:
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamour loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our Council aided, and our laws.
I stanch’d thy father’s death-feud stern,
With stout De Vaux and Grey Glencairn;
And Bothwell’s Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne,—
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid.”

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say, with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On Nature’s raptures long should pry;
He stepp’d between—“Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle ’tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
—Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life’s more low but happier way,
’Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils—for Stirling’s tower
Of yore the name of Snowdown claims,*
And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
Thus watch I o’er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause.”—
Then, in a tone apart and low,—
“Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,

Join'd to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy monarch's life to mountain glaive!"
Aloud he spoke—"Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guess'd
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But, with that consciousness, there came
A lightening of her fears for Græme,
And more she deem'd the monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
"Forbear thy suit:—the King of kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings,
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand.—
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
Hast thou no other boon to crave?
No other captive friend to save?"
Blushing, she turn'd her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wish'd her sire to speak
The suit that stain'd her glowing cheek.—
"Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force;
And stubborn justice holds her course.—
Malcolm, come forth!"—and, at the word,
Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
"For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought, amid thy faithful clan,
A refuge for an outlaw'd man,
Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme!"—
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
 On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
 In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
 The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
 Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
 And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
 Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
 With distant echo from the fold and lea,
 And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel harp!
 Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
 And little reck I of the censure sharp
 May idly cavil at an idle lay.
 Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
 Through secret woes the world has never known,
 When on the weary night dawn'd wearier day,
 And bitterer was the grief devour'd alone.
 That I o'erlived such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
 Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
 'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
 'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
 Receding now, the dying numbers ring
 Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
 And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
 A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
 And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!

NOTE.—The present *brogue* of the Highlanders is made of half-dried leather, with holes to admit and let out the water; for walking the moors dry-shod is a matter altogether out of question. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of undressed deer's hide, with the hair outwards; a circumstance which procured the Highlanders the well-known epithet of *Red-shanks*.

“*The dismal coronach.*”

The *Coronach* of the Highlanders, like the *Ululatus* of the Romans, and the *Ululoo* of the Irish, was a wild expression of lamentation, poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend. When the words of it were articulate, they expressed the praises of the deceased, and the loss the clan would sustain by his death.

NOTES.

Note 1, Page 8.—“*The heaths of Uam-Var.*”

Ua-var, as the name is pronounced, or more properly *Uaighmor*, is a mountain to the north-east of the village of Callender in Menteith, deriving its name, which signifies the great den, or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said, by tradition, to have been the abode of a giant.

Note 2, Page 9.—“*Lochard.*”

“About a mile to the westward of the inn of Aberfoyle, Lochard opens to the view. A few hundred yards to the east of it, the Avendow, which had just issued from the lake, tumbles its waters over a rugged precipice of more than thirty feet in height, forming, in the rainy season, several magnificent cataracts.

“About a mile above Loch Vennachar, the approach east to the *Brigg* or *Bridge of Turk*, leads to the summit of an eminence, where there bursts upon the traveller's eye a sudden and wide prospect of the windings of the river that issues from Loch Achray, with that sweet lake itself in front; the gently rolling river pursues its serpentine course through an extensive meadow; at the west end of the lake, on the side of Aberfoyle, is situated the delightful farm of Achray, *the level field*, a denomination justly due to it, when considered in contrast with the rugged rocks and mountains which surround it. From this eminence are to be seen also, on the right hand, the entrance to Glenfinlas, and in the distance Benvenue.”

Note 3, Page 10.—“*Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed.*”

“The hounds, which we call Saint Hubert's hounds, are commonly all blacke, yet, neutherless, their race is so mingled at these days, that we find them of all colours. These are the hounds which the abbots of St Hubert haue always kept some of their race or kind, in honour or remembrance of the saint, which was a hunter with S. Eustace.”

Note 4, Page 10.—“*Whinyard drew.*”

When the stag turned to bay, the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon, and killing or disabling the desperate animal. At certain times of the year this was held particularly dangerous, a wound received from a stag's horn being then deemed poisonous, and more dangerous than one from the tusks of a boar, as the old rhyme testifies:—

“If thou be hurt with hart, it brings thee to thy bier,
But barber's hand will boar's hurt heal, therefore thou need'st not fear.”

Note 5, Page 18.—“*Here, for retreat in dangerous hour.*”

The Celtic chieftains, whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually, in the most retired spot of their domains, some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut, in a strong and secluded situation.

Note 6, Page 20.—“*Of Ferragus, or Ascabart.*”

These two sons of Anak flourished in romantic fable. The first is well known to the admirers of Ariosto, by the name of Ferrau. He was an antagonist of Orlando, and was at length slain by him in single combat.

Ascapart, or Ascabart, makes a very material figure in the History of Bevis of Hampton, by whom he was conquered. His effigies may be seen guarding one side of a gate at Southampton, while the other is occupied by Sir Bevis himself.

Note 7, Page 21.—“*And still a harp unseen.*”

The Highlanders “delight much in musicke, but chiefly in harps and clairschoes of their own fashion. The strings of the clairschoes are made of brass wire, and the strings of the harps of sinews; which strings they strike either with their nayles, growing long, or else with an instrument appointed for that use.” From remotest times down to the present, harpers were received as welcome guests, particularly in the Highlands of Scotland.

Note 8, Page 24.—“*A minstrel grey.*”

That Highland chieftains, to a late period, retained in their service the bard, as a family officer, admits of very easy proof. The bard is skilled in the genealogy of all the Highland families, sometimes preceptor to the young laird, celebrates in verse the original of the tribe, the famous warlike actions of the successive heads, and sings his own lyrics as an opiate to the chief, when indisposed for sleep.

Note 9, Page 26.—“*The Græme.*”

The powerful family of Graham held extensive possessions in the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling. Few families can boast of more historical renown.

Note 10, Page 27.—“*Erst Saint Modan sway'd.*”

I am not prepared to show that Saint Modan was a performer on the harp. It was, however, no unsaintly accomplishment; for Saint Dunstan certainly did play upon that instrument.

Note 11, Page 27.—“*Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven.*”

The downfall of the Douglasses of the house of Angus, during the reign of James V., is the event alluded to in the text. The Earl of Angus had married the queen dowager, and availed himself of the right which he thus acquired, as well as of his extensive power, to retain the king in a sort of tutelage, which approached very near to captivity. Several open attempts were made to rescue James from this thralldom, with which he was well known to be deeply disgusted; but the valour of the Douglasses, and their allies, gave them the victory in every conflict. At length, the king, while residing at Falkland, contrived to escape by night out of his own court and palace, and rode full speed to Stirling Castle, where the governor, who was of the opposite faction, joyfully received him. James speedily summoned around him such peers as he knew to be most inimical to the domination of Angus. Therefore, said he, I avow, that Scotland shall not hold us both, while [*i.e.*, till] I be avenged on him and his.

“The lords hearing the king's complaint and lamentation, and also the great rage, fury, and malice, that he bore toward the Earl of Angus, his kin, and friends, they concluded all, and thought it best that he should be summoned to underly the law; if he found no caution, nor yet compear himself, that he should be put to the horn, with all his kin and friends, so many as were contained in the letters. And ordained, that his brother and friends should be summoned to find caution to underly the law within a certain day, or else be put to the horn. But the earl appeared not, nor none for him; and so he was put to the horn, with all his kin and friends: so many as were contained in the summons, that compeared not, were banished, and holden traitors to the king.”

Note 12, Page 29.—“*Disowned by every noble peer.*”

The hatred of James against the race of Douglas was so inveterate, that numerous as their allies were, and disregarded as the regal authority had usually been in similar cases, their nearest friends, even in the most remote part of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise.

Note 13, Page 31.—“*The footstep of a secret foe.*”

The ancient warriors, whose hope and confidence rested chiefly in their blades, were accustomed to deduce omens from them, especially from such as were supposed to have been fabricated by enchanted skill, of which we have various instances in the romances and legends of the time.

Lord Lovat is said, by the author of the Letters from Scotland, to have affirmed, that a number of swords that hung up in the hall of the mansion-house, leaped of themselves out of the scabbard at the instant he was born. The story passed current among his clan, but proved an unfortunate omen.

Note 14, Page 32.—“*Of old Clan Alpine to the fight.*”

The connoisseurs in pipe-music affect to discover in a well-composed pibroch, the imitative sounds of march, conflict, flight, pursuit, and all the “current of a heady fight.”

Note 15, Page 33.—“*Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho! ieroe!*”

Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan, and which was common to all his predecessors and successors. But besides this title, the chieftain had usually another peculiar to himself, which distinguished him from the chieftains of the same race. This was sometimes derived from complexion, as *dhu* (black) or *roy* (red); sometimes from size, as *beg* (little) or *more* (great).

The consequences of the battle of Glen-fruin were very calamitous to the family of Macgregor, who had already been considered as an unruly clan. James VI. let loose his vengeance against the Macgregors, without either bounds or moderation. The very name of the clan was proscribed, and those by whom it had been borne were given up to sword and fire, and absolutely hunted down by bloodhounds like wild beasts. They were, in 1715 and 1745, a potent clan, and continue to subsist as a distinct and numerous race.—*Rob Roy.*

Note 16, Page 33.—“*The best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on her side.*”

The Lennox, as the district is called, which encircles the lower extremity of Loch-Lomond, was peculiarly exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers, who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses at the upper end of the lake, and the neighbouring district of Loch Katrine. These were often marked by circumstances of great ferocity, of which the noted conflict of Glen-fruin is a celebrated instance. This was a clan-battle, in which the Macgregors, headed by Allaster Macgregor, chief of the clan, encountered the sept of Colquhouns, commanded by Sir Humphry Colquhoun of Luss. The action was desperately fought, and that the Colquhouns were defeated with slaughter, leaving two hundred of their name dead upon the field.

Note 17, Page 38.—“*Boasts to have tamed the Border-side.*”

In 1529, James V. made a convention at Edinburgh, for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers, who, during the license of his minority, and the troubles which followed, had committed many exorbitances. He assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, consisting of his principal nobility and their followers. The effect of this severity was such, that, as the vulgar expressed it, “rush-bush kept the cow,” and “thereafter was great peace and rest a long time.”—PITSCOTTIE, p. 153.

Note 18, Page 38.—“*What grace for Highland chiefs, judge ye.*”

James was equally attentive to restrain rapine and feudal oppression in every part of his dominions. So he brought the isles both north and south, in good rule and peace; wherefore he had great profit, service, and obedience of people a long time thereafter; and as long as he had the heads of the country in subjection, they lived in great peace and rest, and there was great riches and policy by the king's justice.—PITSCOTTIE, p. 152.

Note 19, Page 42.—“*——His henchman came.*”

This officer is a sort of secretary, and is to be ready, upon all occasions, to venture his life in defence of his master; and at drinking-bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from whence his title is derived, and watches the conversation, to see if any one offends his patron.—LETTERS FROM SCOTLAND, p. 159.

Note 20, Page 44.—“*And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.*”

When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the *Fiery Cross*, also *Crean Tarigh*, or the *Cross of Shame*, because disobedience to what the symbol implied, inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal dispatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear, suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal. During the civil war of 1745-6, the Fiery Cross often made its circuit, on one occasion making the circuit of Breadalbane, a tract of thirty-two miles, in three hours.

Note 21, Page 45.—“*That monk, of savage form and face.*”

The state of religion in the middle ages afforded considerable facilities for those whose mode of life excluded them from regular worship, to secure, nevertheless, the ghostly assistance of confessors, perfectly willing to adapt the nature of their doctrine to the necessities and peculiar circumstances of their flock. Robin Hood, it is well known, had his celebrated domestic chaplain Friar Tuck. And that same curial friar was probably matched in manners and appearance by the ghostly fathers of the Tynedale robbers.

Note 22, Page 46.—“*——the virgin snood.*”

The *snood*, or riband, with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch*, *toy*, or coif, when she passed, by marriage, into the matron state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden, without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the *snood*, nor advanced to the graver dignity of the *curch*.

Note 23, Page 47.—“*Such as might suit the spectre's child.*”

In adopting the legend concerning the birth of the Founder of the Church of Kilmalie, the author has endeavoured to trace the effects which such a belief was likely to produce, in a barbarous age, on the person to whom it related. It seems likely that he must have become a fanatic or an impostor, or that mixture of both which forms a more frequent character than either of them, as existing separately. In truth, mad persons are frequently more anxious to impress upon others a faith in their visions, than they are themselves confirmed in their reality; as, on the other hand, it is difficult for the most cool-headed impostor long to personate an enthusiast, without in some degree believing what he is so eager to have believed. The River Demon or River-horse, for it is that form which he commonly assumes, is the Kelpy of the Lowlands, an evil and malicious spirit, delighting to forebode and to witness calamity. He frequents most Highland lakes and rivers; and one of his most memorable exploits was performed upon the banks of Loch Vennachar, in the very district which forms the scene of our action: it consisted in the destruction of a funeral procession, with all its attendants. The “noontide hag,” called in Gaelic *Glas-lich*, a tall, emaciated, gigantic female figure, is supposed in particular to haunt the district of Knoidart. A goblin dressed in antique armour, and having one hand covered with blood, called, from that circumstance, *Lham-dearg*, or Red-hand, is a tenant of the forests of Glenmore and Rothiemurcus. Other spirits of the desert, all frightful in shape and malignant in disposition, are believed to frequent different mountains and glens of the Highlands, where any unusual appearance, produced by mist, or the strange lights that are sometimes thrown upon particular objects, never fails to present an apparition to the imagination of the solitary and melancholy mountaineer.

Note 24, Page 47.—“*The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream.*”

Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or rather a domestic spirit, attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated, by its wailings, any approaching disaster. That of Grant of Grant was called *May Moullach*, and appeared in the form of a girl, who had her arm covered with hair. Grant of Rothiemurcus had an attendant called *Bodach-andun*, or the Ghost of the Hill; and many other examples might be mentioned. The Ban-Shie implies a female Fairy, whose lamentations were often supposed to precede the death of a chieftain of particular families. When she is visible, it is in the form of an old woman, with a blue mantle and streaming hair.

Note 25, Page 47.—“*Of charging steeds, careering fast.*”

A presage of the kind alluded to in the text, is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice round the family residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity. Supernatural intimations of approaching fate are not, I believe, confined to Highland families.—SURVEY OF THE LAKES, p. 25.

Note 26, Page 48.—“*Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave.*”

Inch-Cailliach, the Isle of Nuns, or of Old Women, is a most beautiful island at the lower extremity of Loch Lomond. The church belonging to the former nunnery was long used as the place of worship for the parish of Buchanan, but scarce any vestiges of it now remain. The burial-ground continues to be used, and contains the family places of sepulture of several neighbouring clans. The monuments of the lairds of Macgregor, and of other families claiming a descent from the old Scottish King Alpine, are also remarkable. The Highlanders are as zealous of their rights of sepulture, as “may his ashes be scattered on the water,” was one of the deepest and most solemn imprecations which they used against an enemy.

Note 27, Page 58.—“*Rugged silvan grot.*”

On the skirts of Benvenue, the *cave of the goblins* is a deep circular amphitheatre of at least 600 yards of extent in its upper diameter, gradually narrowing towards the base, hemmed in all round by steep and towering rocks, and rendered impenetrable to the rays of the sun by a close covert of luxuriant trees. On the south and west it is bounded by the precipitous shoulder of Benvenue, to the height of at least 500 feet; towards the east, the rock appears at some former period to have tumbled down, strewing the whole course of its fall with immense fragments, which now serve only to give shelter to foxes, wild-cats, and badgers.

Note 28, Page 59.—“*A single page, to bear his sword.*”

A Highland chief, being as absolute in his patriarchal authority, as any prince, had a corresponding number of officers attached to his person. He had his body-

guards, called *Luichttach*, picked from his clan for strength, activity, and entire devotion to his person. These, according to their deserts, were sure to share abundantly in the rude profusion of his hospitality. It is recorded, for example, by tradition, that Allan MacLean, chief of that clan, happened upon a time to hear one of these favourite retainers observe to his comrade, that their chief grew old—"Whence do you infer that?" replied the other.—"When was it," rejoined the first, "that a soldier of Allan's was obliged, as I am now, not only to eat the flesh from the bone, but even to tear off the inner skin, or filament?" The hint was quite sufficient, and MacLean next morning, to relieve his followers from such dire necessity, undertook an inroad on the mainland, the ravage of which, altogether effaced the memory of his former expeditions for the like purpose.

Note 29, Page 63.—"*The Taghairm call'd, by which, afar.*"

The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the *Taghairm*, mentioned in the text. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited beside a water-fall, or at the bottom of a precipice, or in some other strange, wild, and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. There he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits, who haunt the desolate recesses.

Note 30, Page 63.—"*When swept our merry-men Gallangad.*"

This passage is taken almost literally from the mouth of an old Highland Kern, or Ketteran, as they were called. He used to narrate the merry doings of the good old time when he was follower of Rob Roy Macgregor. This leader, on one occasion, thought proper to make a descent upon the lower part of the Loch Lomond district, and summoned all the heritors and farmers to meet at the Kirk of Drymen, to pay him black-mail, *i.e.*, tribute for forbearance and protection. As this invitation was supported by a band of thirty or forty stout fellows, only one gentleman, an ancestor of the present Mr Grahame of Gartmore, ventured to decline compliance. Rob Roy instantly swept his land of all he could drive away, and among the spoil was a bull of the old Scottish wild breed, whose ferocity occasioned great plague to the Ketterans. "But ere we had reached the Row of Dennan," said the old men, "a child might have scratched his ears."

Note 31, Page 64.—"*His morsel claims with sullen croak.*"

Quartered.—Everything belonging to the chase was matter of solemnity among our ancestors; but nothing was more so than the mode of cutting up, or, as it was technically called, *breaking*, the slaughtered stag. The forester had his allotted portion; the hounds had a certain allowance; and, to make the division as general as possible, the very birds had their share also. "There is a little gristle," says Turberville, "which is upon the spoone of the brisket, which we call the raven's bone; and I have seen in some places a raven so wont and accustomed to it, that she would never fail to croak and cry for it all the time you were in breaking up of the deer, and would not depart till she had it."

Note 32, Page 69.—"*Beloved of our Elfin Queen.*"

The fairies, if not positively malevolent, are capricious, and easily offended. They are, like other proprietors of forests, peculiarly jealous of their rights of *vert* and *venison*, as appears from the cause of offence taken, in the original Danish ballad. This jealousy was also an attribute of the northern *Duergar*, or dwarfs; to many of whose distinctions the fairies seem to have succeeded, if, indeed, they are not the same class of beings.

Note 33, Page 70.—"*But all is glistening show.*"

No fact respecting Fairy-land seems to be better ascertained than the fantastic and illusory nature of their apparent pleasure and splendour.

Note 34, Page 70.—"*To the joyless Elfin bower.*"

The subjects of Fairy-land were recruited from the regions of humanity by a sort of *crimping* system, which extended to adults as well as to infants. Many of those who were in this world supposed to have discharged the debt of nature, had only become denizens of the "Londe of Faery."

Note 35, Page 79.—"*The harden'd flesh of mountain deer.*"

After all it may be doubted whether *la chaire nostree*, for so the French called the venison thus prepared, was anything more than a mere rude kind of deer ham.

Note 36, Page 83.—“*Was stranger to respect and power.*”

There is scarcely a more disorderly period of Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V. Feuds of ancient standing broke out like old wounds, and every quarrel among the independent nobility, which occurred daily, and almost hourly, gave rise to fresh blood-shed. Under the government of the Earl of Angus—for though he caused the king to ride through all Scotland, “under the pretence and colour of justice, to punish thief and traitor—none were found greater than were in their own company. And none at that time durst strive with a Douglas, nor yet a Douglas’s man; for if they would, they got the worst. Therefore, none durst plainzie of no extortion, theft, reiff, nor slaughter, done to them by the Douglasses, or their men; in that cause they were not heard, so long as the Douglas had the court in guiding.”

Note 37, Page 84.—“*Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.*”

So far, indeed, was a *Creagh*, or foray, from being held disgraceful, that a young chief was always expected to show his talents for command so soon as he assumed it, by leading his clan on a successful enterprise of this nature, either against a neighbouring sept, for which constant feuds usually furnished an apology, or against the *Sassenach*, Saxons, or Lowlanders, for which no apology was necessary. The Gael, great traditional historians, never forgot that the Lowlands had, at some remote period, been the property of their Celtic forefathers, which furnished an ample vindication of all the ravages that they could make on the unfortunate districts which lay within their reach. Sir James Grant, of Grant, is in possession of a letter of apology from Cameron of Lochiel, whose men had committed some depredation upon a farm called Moines, occupied by one of the Grants. Lochiel assures Grant, that, however the mistake had happened, his instructions were precise, that the party should foray the province of Moray (a Lowland district) where, as he coolly observes, “all men take their prey.”

Note 38, Page 87.—“*Arm’d, like thyself, with single brand.*”

The duellists of former times did not always stand upon those punctilios respecting equality of arms, which are now judged essential to fair combat. In formal combat in the lists, the parties were, by the judges of the field, put as nearly as possible in the same circumstances; but in private duel it was often otherwise.

Note 39, Page 89.—“*That on the field his targe he threw.*”

A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander’s equipment. In charging regular troops, they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside, and used the broadsword against the encumbered soldier.

Note 40, Page 89.—“*Fitz-James’s blade was sword and shield.*”

The use of defensive armour, and particularly of the buckler, or target, was general in Queen Elizabeth’s time, although that of the single rapier seems to have been occasionally practised much earlier. The Highlanders continued to use broadsword and target until disarmed after the affair of 1745-6.

Note 41, Page 89.—“*Full at Fitz-James’s throat he sprung.*”

I have not ventured to render this duel so savagely desperate as that of the celebrated Sir Ewan of Lochiel, chief of the clan Cameron, called, from his sable complexion, Ewan Dhu. He was the last man in Scotland who maintained the royal cause during the great Civil War, and his constant incursions rendered him a very unpleasant neighbour to the republic garrison at Inverlochy—now Fort-William. I have chosen to give my heroes, who are indeed of an earlier period, a stronger tincture of the spirit of chivalry.

Note 42, Page 92.—“*Thou oft hast heard the death-axe sound.*”

An eminence on the north-east of the Castle, where state criminals were executed. Stirling was often polluted with noble blood. The fate of William, eighth Earl of Douglas, whom James II. stabbed in Stirling Castle with his own hand, and while under his royal safe-conduct, is familiar to all who read Scottish history. Murdock Duke of Albany, Duncan Earl of Lennox, his father-in-law, and his two sons, Walter and Alexander Stewart, were executed at Stirling in 1425. They were beheaded upon an eminence without the castle walls, but making part of the same hill, from whence they could behold their strong castle of Doune.

Note 43, Page 93.—“*The burghers hold their sports to-day.*”

Every burgh of Scotland of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn *play* or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited,

and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. Stirling, a usual place of royal residence, was not likely to be deficient in pomp upon such occasions, especially since James V. was very partial to them. The exhibition of the outlaw Robin Hood and his band was a favourite frolic at such festivals as we are describing. This sporting, in which kings did not disdain to be actors, was prohibited in Scotland upon the Reformation, by a statute of the 6th Parliament of Queen Mary, c. 61, A.D. 1555. The game of Robin Hood was usually acted in May; and he was associated with the morrice-dancers, on whom so much illustration has been bestowed by the commentators on Shakspeare. The Douglas of the poem is an imaginary person, a supposed uncle of the Earl of Angus. But the king's behaviour during an interview with the Laird of Kilspindie, one of the banished Douglasses, under circumstances similar to those in the text, is imitated from a real story told by Hume of Godscroft.

Note 44, Page 102.—“*Adventurers they*——”

The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them, for military service by themselves and their tenants. The patriarchal influence exercised by the heads of clans in the Highlands and Borders, was of a different nature, and sometimes at variance with feudal principles. It flowed from the *Patria Potestas*, exercised by the chieftain as representing the original father of the whole name, and was often obeyed in contradiction to the feudal superior. James V. first introduced the service of a small number of mercenaries, who formed a body-guard, called the Foot-Band.

Note 45, Page 104.—“*The leader of a juggler band.*”

The jongleurs, or jugglers, used to call in the aid of various assistants, to render these performances as captivating as possible. The glee-maiden was a necessary attendant. Her duty was tumbling and dancing. In Scotland, these poor creatures seem, even at a late period, to have been bondswomen to their masters, as appears from a case reported by Fountainhall. There are several instances, at least in tradition, of persons so much attached to particular tunes, as to require to hear them on their death-bed.

Note 46, Page 109.—“*Battle of Beal' an Duin.*”

A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It was greatly posterior in date to the reign of James V. Rob Roy, while on his death-bed, learned that a person with whom he was at enmity, proposed to visit him. “Raise me from my bed,” said the invalid; “throw my plaid around me, and bring me my claymore, dirk, and pistols; it shall never be said that a foeman saw Rob Roy MacGregor defenceless and unarmed.” Rob Roy maintained a cold and haughty civility during their short conference; and so soon as he had left the house, “Now,” he said, “all is over; let the piper play, ‘*Ha til mi tulidb,*’” [we return no more]; and he is said to have expired before the dirge was finished.

Note 47, Page 117.—“*And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King.*”

The incident is borrowed from Scottish tradition. James V. was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic feats venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower, and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the *King of the Commons*. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises.

Note 48, Page 118.—“——— *Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdown claims.*”

“Adieu, fair Snawdown, with thy towers high,
Thy chapel-royal, park, and table round.”

Snawdown is the official title of one of the Scottish heralds, whose epithets seem in all countries to have been fantastically adapted from ancient history or romance. The real name by which James was actually distinguished in his private excursions was the *Goodman of Ballingnich*—derived from a steep pass leading up to the Castle of Stirling so-called.

LORD OF THE ISLES

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

LOCH RANZA CASTLE ARRAN

LORD OF THE ISLES

BY S. R. WALTER SCOTT

LOCH RANZA CASTLE ARRAN

THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

A Poem.

IN SIX CANTOS.

WITH NOTES.

TO

THE MOST NOBLE

JOHN JAMES MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,

&c., &c., &c.,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The scene of this Poem lies, at first, in the Castle of Artornish, on the coast of Argyleshire; and, afterwards, in the Islands of Skye and Arran, and upon the coast of Ayrshire. Finally, it is laid near Stirling. The story opens in the spring of the year 1307, when Bruce, who had been driven out of Scotland by the English, and the Barons who adhered to that foreign interest, returned from the Island of Rachrin, on the coast of Ireland, again to assert his claims to the Scottish crown. Many of the personages and incidents introduced are of historical celebrity. The authorities used are chiefly those of the venerable Lord Hailes, as well entitled to be called the restorer of Scottish history, as Bruce the restorer of Scottish monarchy; and of Archdeacon Barbour, a correct edition of whose Metrical History of Robert Bruce will soon, I trust, appear, under the care of my learned friend, the Rev. Dr Jamieson.

ABBOTSFORD, 10th December, 1814.

The Lord of the Isles.



CANTO FIRST.

AUTUMN departs—but still his mantle's fold
Rests on the groves of noble Somerville,
Beneath a shroud of russet droop'd with gold,
Tweed and his tributaries mingle still;
Hoarser the wind, and deeper sounds the rill,
Yet lingering notes of silvan music swell,
The deep-toned cushat, and the redbreast shrill;
And yet some tints of summer splendour tell
When the broad sun sinks down on Ettrick's western fell.

Autumn departs—from Gala's fields no more
Come rural sounds our kindred banks to cheer;
Blent with the stream, and gale that wafts it o'er,
No more the distant reaper's mirth we hear.
The last blithe shout hath died upon our ear,
And harvest-home hath hush'd the clanging wain,
On the waste hill no forms of life appear,
Save where, sad laggard of the autumnal train,
Some age-struck wanderer gleams few ears of scatter'd grain.

Deem'st thou these sadden'd scenes have pleasure still,
Lovest thou through Autumn's fading realms to stray,
To see the heath-flower wither'd on the hill,
To listen to the wood's expiring lay,
To note the red leaf shivering on the spray,
To mark the last bright tints the mountain stain,
On the waste fields to trace the gleaner's way,
And moralize on mortal joy and pain?—
O! if such scenes thou lovest, scorn not the minstrel strain.

No! do not scorn, although its hoarser note
Scarce with the cushat's homely song can vie,
Though faint its beauties as the tints remote,
That gleam through mist in Autumn's evening sky,
And few as leaves that tremble, sear and dry,

When wild November hath his bugle wound;
 Nor mock my toil—a lonely gleaner I,
 Through fields time-wasted, on sad inquest bound,
 Where happier bards of yore have richer harvest found.
 So shalt thou list, and haply not unmoved,
 To a wild tale of Albyn's warrior day;
 In distant lands, by the rough West reproved,
 Still live some relics of the ancient lay.
 For, when on Coolin's hills the lights decay,
 With such the Seer of Skye the eve beguiles;
 'Tis known amid the pathless wastes of Reay,
 In Harris known, and in Iona's piles,
 Where rest from mortal coil the Mighty of the Isles.

I.

"WAKE, Maid of Lorn!" the Minstrels sung.—
 Thy rugged halls, Artornish! rung,
 And the dark seas, thy towers that lave,
 Heaved on the beach a softer wave,
 As 'mid the tuneful choir to keep
 The diapason of the Deep.
 Lull'd were the winds on Inninmore,
 And green Loch-Aline's woodland shore,
 As if wild woods and waves had pleasure
 In listing to the lovely measure.
 And ne'er to symphony more sweet
 Gave mountain echoes answer meet,
 Since, met from mainland and from isle,
 Ross, Arran, Islay, and Argyle,
 Each minstrel's tributary lay
 Paid homage to the festal day.
 Dull and dishonour'd were the bard,
 Worthless of guerdon and regard,
 Deaf to the hope of minstrel fame,
 Or lady's smiles, his noblest aim,
 Who on that morn's resistless call
 Were silent in Artornish hall.

II.

"Wake, Maid of Lorn!"—'twas thus they sung,
 And yet more proud the descant rung,
 "Wake, Maid of Lorn! high right is ours,
 To charm dull sleep from Beauty's bowers;
 Earth, Ocean, Air, have nought so shy
 But owns the power of minstrelsy.
 In Lettermore the timid deer
 Will pause, the harp's wild chime to hear;
 Rude Heiskar's seal through surges dark
 Will long pursue the minstrel's bark;*

* Note 1.

To list his notes, the eagle proud
 Will poise him on Ben Cailliach's cloud;
 Then let not Maiden's ear disdain
 The summons of the minstrel train,
 But, while our harps wild music make,
 Edith of Lorn, awake, awake!

III.

"O wake, while Dawn, with dewy shine,
 Wakes Nature's charms to vie with thine!
 She bids the mottled thrush rejoice
 To mate thy melody of voice;
 The dew that on the violet lies
 Mocks the dark lustre of thine eyes;
 But, Edith, wake, and all we see
 Of sweet and fair shall yield to thee!"—
 "She comes not yet," grey Ferrand cried;
 "Brethren, let softer spell be tried,
 Those notes prolong'd, that soothing theme,
 Which best may mix with Beauty's dream,
 And whisper, with their silvery tone,
 The hope she loves, yet fears to own."
 He spoke, and on the harp-strings died
 The strains of flattery and of pride;
 More soft, more low, more tender fell
 The lay of love he bade them tell.

IV.

"Wake, Maid of Lorn, the moments fly,
 Which yet that maiden-name allow;
 Wake, Maiden, wake! the hour is nigh,
 When love shall claim a plighted vow.
 By Fear, thy bosom's fluttering guest,
 By Hope, that soon shall fears remove,
 We bid thee break the bonds of rest,
 And wake thee at the call of Love!
 "Wake, Edith wake! in yonder bay
 Lies many a galley gaily mann'd,
 We hear the merry pibroch's play,
 We see the streamers' silken band.
 What Chieftain's praise these pibroch's swell,
 What crest is on these banners wove,
 The harp, the minstrel, dare not tell—
 The riddle must be read by Love."

V.

Retired her maiden train among,
 Edith of Lorn received the song,
 But tamed the minstrel's pride had been
 That had her cold demeanour seen;

For not upon her cheek awoke
 The glow of pride when Flattery spoke,
 Nor could their tenderest numbers bring
 One sigh responsive to the string.
 As vainly had her maidens vied
 In skill to deck the princely bride.
 Her locks, in dark-brown length array'd,
 Cathleen of Ulne, 'twas thine to braid;
 Young Eva with meet reverence drew
 On the light foot the silken shoe,
 While on the ankle's slender round
 Those strings of pearl fair Bertha wound,
 That, bleach'd Lochryan's depths within,
 Seem'd dusky still on Edith's skin.
 But Einion, of experience old,
 Had weightiest task—the mantle's fold
 In many an artful plait she tied,
 To show the form it seem'd to hide,
 Till on the floor descending roll'd
 Its waves of crimson blent with gold.

VI.

O! lives there now so cold a maid,
 Who thus in beauty's pomp array'd,
 In beauty's proudest pitch of power,
 And conquest won—the bridal hour—
 With every charm that wins the heart,
 By Nature given, enhanced by Art,
 Could yet the fair reflection view,
 In the bright mirror pictured true,
 And not one dimple on her cheek
 A tell-tale consciousness bespeak?—
 Lives still such maid?—Fair damsels, say,
 For further vouches not my lay,
 Save that such lived in Britain's isle,
 When Lorn's bright Edith scorn'd to smile.

VII.

But Morag, to whose fostering care
 Proud Lorn had given his daughter fair,
 Morag, who saw a mother's aid
 By all a daughter's love repaid,
 (Strict was that bond—most kind of all—
 Inviolable in Highland hall)—
 Grey Morag sate a space apart,
 In Edith's eyes to read her heart.
 In vain the attendant's fond appeal
 To Morag's skill, to Morag's zeal;
 She mark'd her child receive their care,
 Cold as the image sculptur'd fair,

(Form of some sainted patroness),
 Which cloister'd maids combine to dress;
 She mark'd—and knew her nursling's heart
 In the vain pomp took little part.
 Wistful a while she gazed—then pressed
 The maiden to her anxious breast
 In finish'd loveliness—and led
 To where a turret's airy head,
 Slender and steep, and battled round,
 O'erlook'd, dark Mull! thy mighty Sound,*
 Where thwarting tides, with mingled roar,
 Part thy swarth hills from Morven's shore.

VIII.

"Daughter," she said, "these seas behold,
 Round twice a hundred islands roll'd,
 From Hirt, that hears their northern roar,
 To the green Islay's fertile shore;†
 Or mainland turn where many a tower
 Owns thy bold brother's feudal power,
 Each on its own dark cape reclined,
 And listening to its own wild wind,
 From where Mingarry, sternly placed,‡
 O'erawes the woodland and the waste,
 To where Dunstaffnage hears the raging
 Of Connal with its rocks engaging.
 Think'st thou, amid this ample round,
 A single brow but thine has frown'd,
 To sadden this auspicious morn,
 That bids the daughter of high Lorn
 Impledge her spousal faith to wed
 The heir of mighty Somerled?§
 Ronald, from many a hero sprung,
 The fair, the valiant, and the young,
 LORD OF THE ISLES, whose lofty name||
 A thousand bards have given to fame,
 The mate of monarchs, and allied
 On equal terms with England's pride.—
 From Chieftain's tower to bondsman's cot,
 Who hears the tale, and triumphs not?
 The damsel dons her best attire,
 The shepherd lights his beltane fire,
 Joy! joy! each warder's horn hath sung,
 Joy! joy! each matin bell hath rung;
 The holy priest says grateful mass,
 Loud shouts each hardy galla-glass,
 No mountain den holds outcast boor,
 Of heart so dull, of soul so poor,

* Note 2.

† Note 3.

‡ Note 4.

§ Note 5.

|| Note 6.

But he hath flung his task aside,
And claim'd this morn for holy-tide;
Yet, empress of this joyful day,
Edith is sad while all are gay."—

IX.

Proud Edith's soul came to her eye,
Resentment check'd the struggling sigh.
Her hurrying hand indignant dried
The burning tears of injured pride—
"Morag, forbear! or lend thy praise
To swell yon hireling harpers' lays;
Make to yon maids thy boast of power,
That they may waste a wondering hour,
Telling of banners proudly borne,
Of pealing bell and bugle horn,
Or, theme more dear, of robes of price,
Crownlets and gauds of rare device.
But thou, experienced as thou art,
Think'st thou with these to cheat the heart,
That, bound in strong affection's chain,
Looks for return and looks in vain?
No! sum thine Edith's wretched lot
In these brief words—He loves her not!

X.

"Debate it not—too long I strove
To call his cold observance love,
All blinded by the league that styled
Edith of Lorn,—while yet a child,
She tripp'd the heath by Morag's side,—
The brave Lord Ronald's destined bride.
Ere yet I saw him, while afar
His brodsword blazed in Scotland's war,
Train'd to believe our fates the same,
My bosom throb'd when Ronald's name
Came gracing Fame's heroic tale,
Like perfume on the summer gale.
What pilgrim sought our halls, nor told
Of Ronald's deeds in battle bold;
Who touch'd the harp to heroes' praise,
But his achievements swell'd the lays?
Even Morag—not a tale of fame
Was hers but closed with Ronald's name.
He came! and all that had been told
Of his high worth seem'd poor and cold,
Tame, lifeless, void of energy,
Unjust to Ronald and to me!

XI.

"Since then, what thought had Edith's heart
And gave not plighted love its part!—
And what requital? cold delay—
Excuse that shunn'd the spousal day.—
It dawns, and Ronald is not here!—
Hunts he Bentalla's nimble deer,
Or loiters he in secret dell
To bid some lighter love farewell,
And swear, that though he may not scorn
A daughter of the House of Lorn,*
Yet, when these formal rites are o'er,
Again they meet, to part no more?"

XII.

"Hush, daughter, hush! thy doubts remove,
More nobly think of Ronald's love.
Look, where beneath the castle grey
His fleet unmoor from Aros bay!
See'st not each galley's topmast bend,
As on the yards the sails ascend?
Hiding the dark-blue land they rise,
Like the white clouds on April skies;
The shouting vassals man the oars,
Behind them sink Mull's mountain shores,
Onward their merry course they keep,
Through whistling breeze and foaming deep.
And mark the headmost, seaward cast,
Stoop to the freshening gale her mast,
As if she veil'd its banner'd pride,
To greet afar her Prince's bride!
Thy Ronald comes, and while in speed
His galley mates the flying steed,
He chides her sloth!"—Fair Edith sigh'd,
Blush'd, sadly smiled, and thus replied:—

XIII.

"Sweet thought, but vain!—No, Morag! mark,
Type of his course, yon lonely bark,
That oft hath shifted helm and sail,
To win its way against the gale.
Since peep of morn, my vacant eyes
Have view'd by fits the course she tries;
Now, though the darkening scud comes on,
And dawn's fair promises be gone,
And though the weary crew may see
Our sheltering haven on their lee,
Still closer to the rising wind
They strive her shivering sail to bind,

* Note 7.

Still nearer to the shelves' dread verge
At every tack her course they urge.
As if they fear'd Artornish more
Than adverse winds and breakers' roar."

XIV.

Sooth spoke the Maid.—Amid the tide
The skiff she mark'd lay tossing sore,
And shifted oft her stooping side,
In weary tack from shore to shore.
Yet on her destined course no more
She gain'd, of forward way,
Than what a minstrel may compare
To the poor meed which peasants share,
Who toil the livelong day;
And such the risk her pilot braves,
That oft, before she wore,
Her boltsprit kiss'd the broken waves,
Where in white foam the ocean raves
Upon the shelving shore.
Yet, to their destined purpose true,
Undaunted toil'd her hardy crew,
Nor look'd where shelter lay,
Nor for Artornish Castle drew,
Nor steer'd for Aros bay.

XV.

Thus while they strove with wind and seas,
Borne onward by the willing breeze,
Lord Ronald's fleet swept by,
Streamer'd with silk, and trick'd with gold,
Mann'd with the noble and the bold
Of island chivalry.
Around their prows the ocean roars,
And chafes beneath their thousand oars,
Yet bears them on their way:
So chafes the war-horse in his might,
That fieldward bears some valiant knight,
Champs, till both bit and boss are white,
But, foaming, must obey.
On each gay deck they might behold
Lances of steel and crests of gold.
And hauberks with their burnish'd fold,
That shimmer'd fair and free;
And each proud galley, as she pass'd,
To the wild cadence of the blast
Gave wilder minstrelsy.
Full many a shrill triumphant note
Saline and Scallastle bade float
Their misty shores around;

And Morven's echoes answer'd well
And Duart heard the distant swell
Come down the darksome Sound.

XVI.

So bore they on with mirth and pride,
And if that labouring bark they spied,
'Twas with such idle eye
As nobles cast on lowly boor,
When, toiling in his task obscure,
They pass him careless by.
Let them sweep on with heedless eyes!
But, had they known what mighty prize
In that frail vessel lay,
The famish'd wolf, that prowls the wold,
Had scatheless pass'd the unguarded fold,
Ere, drifting by these galleys bold,
Unchallenged were her way!
And thou, Lord Ronald, sweep thou on,
With mirth, and pride, and minstrel tone!
But hadst thou known who sail'd so nigh,
Far other glance were in thine eye!
Far other flush were on thy brow,
That, shaded by the bonnet, now
Assumes but ill the blithesome cheer
Of bridegroom when the bride is near!

XVII.

Yes, sweep they on!—We will not leave,
For them that triumph, those who grieve.
With that armada gay
Be laughter loud and jocund shout,
And bards to cheer the wassail route,
With tale, romance, and lay;
And of wild mirth each clamorous art,
Which, if it cannot cheer the heart,
May stupify and stun its smart,
For one loud busy day.
Yes, sweep they on!—But with that skiff
Abides the minstrel tale,
Where there was dread of surge and cliff,
Labour that strain'd each sinew stiff,
And one sad Maiden's wail.

XVIII.

All day with fruitless strife they toil'd,
With eve the ebbing currents boil'd
More fierce from strait and lake;
And midway through the channel met
Conflicting tides that foam and fret,

And high their mingled billows jet,
 As spears, that, in the battle set,
 Spring upward as they break.
 Then, too, the lights of eve were past,
 And louder sung the western blast
 On rocks of Inninmore;
 Rent was the sail, and strain'd the mast,
 And many a leak was gaping fast,
 And the pale steersman stood aghast,
 And gave the conflict o'er.

XIX.

"Twas then that One, whose lofty look
 Nor labour dull'd nor terror shook,
 Thus to the Leader spoke:—
 "Brother, how hopest thou to abide
 The fury of this wilder'd tide,
 Or how avoid the rock's rude side,
 Until the day has broke?
 Didst thou not mark the vessel reel,
 With quivering planks, and groaning keel,
 At the last billow's shock?
 Yet how of better counsel tell,
 Though here thou see'st poor Isabel
 Half dead with want and fear;
 For look on sea, or look on land,
 Or yon dark sky—on every hand
 Despair and death are near.
 For her alone I grieve—on me
 Danger sits light, by land and sea,
 I follow where thou wilt;
 Either to bide the tempest's lour,
 Or wend to yon unfriendly tower,
 Or rush amid their naval power,
 With war-cry wake their wassail-hour,
 And die with hand on hilt."

XX.

That elder Leader's calm reply
 In steady voice was given,
 "In man's most dark extremity
 Oft succour dawns from Heaven.
 Edward, trim thou the shatter'd sail,
 The helm be mine, and down the gale
 Let our free course be driven;
 So shall we 'scape the western bay,
 The hostile fleet, the unequal fray,
 So safely hold our vessel's way
 Beneath the Castle wall;

For if a hope of safety rest,
'Tis on the sacred name of guest,
Who seeks for shelter, storm-distress'd,
 Within a chieftain's hall:
If not—it best beseems our worth,
Our name, our right, our lofty birth,
 By noble hands to fall."

XXI.

The helm, to his strong arm consign'd,
Gave the reef'd sail to meet the wind,
 And on her alter'd way,
Fierce bounding, forward sprung the ship,
Like greyhound starting from the slip
 To seize his flying prey.
Awaked before the rushing prow,
The mimic fires of ocean glow,
 Those lightnings of the wave; *
Wild sparkles crest the broken tides,
And, flashing round, the vessel's sides
 With elvish lustre lave,
While, far behind, their livid light
To the dark billows of the night
 A gloomy splendour gave,
It seems as if old Ocean shakes
From his dark brow the lucid flakes
 In envious pageantry,
To match the meteor-light that streaks
 Grim Hecla's midnight sky.

XXII.

Not lack'd they steadier light to keep
Their course upon the darken'd deep;—
Artornish, on her frowning steep
 'Twixt cloud and ocean hung,
Glanced with a thousand lights of glee,
And landward far, and far to sea,
 Her festal radiance flung.
By that blithe beacon-light they steer'd,
 Whose lustre mingled well
With the pale beam that now appear'd
As the cold moon her head uprear'd
 Above the eastern fell.

XXIII.

Thus guided, on their course they bore,
Until they near'd the mainland shore,
When frequent on the hollow blast
Wild shouts of merriment were cast,

* Note 8.

And wind and wave and sea-birds' cry
 With wassail sounds in concert vie,
 Like funeral shrieks with revelry
 Or like the battle-shout
 By peasants heard from cliffs on high,
 When Triumph, Rage, and Agony,
 Madden the fight and rout.
 Now nearer yet, through mist and storm
 Dimly arose the Castle's form,
 And deepen'd shadow made,
 Far lengthen'd on the main below,
 Where, dancing in reflected glow,
 A hundred torches play'd,
 Spangling the wave with lights as vain
 As pleasures in this vale of pain,
 That dazzle as they fade.

XXIV.

Beneath the Castle's sheltering lee,
 They staid their course in quiet sea;
 Hewn in the rock, a passage there
 Sought the dark fortress by a stair,*
 So strait, so high, so steep,
 With peasant's staff one valiant hand
 Might well the dizzy pass have mann'd,
 'Gainst hundreds arm'd with spear and brand,
 And plung'd them in the deep.
 His bugle then the helmsman wound;
 Loud answer'd every echo round,
 From turret, rock, and bay,
 The postern's hinges crash and groan,
 And soon the Warder's cresset shone
 On those rude steps of slippery stone
 To light the upward way.
 "Thrice welcome, holy Sire!" he said;
 "Full long the spousal train have staid,
 And, vex'd at thy delay,
 Fear'd lest, amidst these wildering seas,
 The darksome night and freshening breeze
 Had driven thy bark astray."—

XXV.

"Warder," the young stranger said,
 "Thine erring guess some mirth had made
 In mirthful hour; but nights like these,
 When the rough winds wake western seas,
 Brook not of glee. We crave some aid
 And needful shelter for this maid
 Until the break of day;

* Note 9.

For, to ourselves, the deck's rude plank
 Is easy as the mossy bank
 That's breath'd upon by May.
 And for our storm-toss'd skiff we seek
 Short shelter in this leeward creek,
 Prompt when the dawn the east shall streak,
 Again to bear away."—
 Answered the Warder, "In what name
 Assert ye hospitable claim?
 Whence come, or whither bound?
 Hath Erin seen your parting sails,
 Or come ye on Norwegian gales?
 And seek ye England's fertile vales,
 Or Scotland's mountain ground?"

XXVI.

"Warriors—for other title none
 For some brief space we list to own,
 Bound by a vow—warriors are we;
 In strife by land and storm by sea,
 We have been known to fame;
 And these brief words have import dear,
 When sounded in a noble ear,
 To harbour safe, and friendly cheer,
 That gives us rightful claim.
 Grant us the trivial boon we seek,
 And we in other realms will speak
 Fair of your courtesy;
 Deny—and be your niggard Hold
 Scorn'd by the noble and the bold,
 Shunn'd by the pilgrim on the wold,
 And wanderer on the lea!"

XXVII.

"Bold stranger, no—'gainst claim like thine,
 No bolt revolves by hand of mine,
 Though urged in tone that more express'd
 A monarch than a suppliant guest.
 Be what you will, Artornish Hall
 On this glad eve is free to all.
 Though ye had drawn a hostile sword
 'Gainst, our ally, great England's Lord,
 Or mail upon your shoulders borne,
 To battle with the Lord of Lorn,
 Or, outlaw'd, dwelt by greenwood tree
 With the fierce Knight of Ellerslie,*

* Sir William Wallace.

Or aided even the murderous strife,
 When Comyn fell beneath the knife;
 Of that fell homicide The Bruce,
 This night had been a term of truce.—
 Ho, vassals! give these guests your care,
 And show the narrow postern stair.”

XXVIII.

To land these two bold brethren leapt,
 (The weary crew their vessel kept);
 And, lighted by the torches' flare,
 That seaward flung their smoky glare,
 The younger knight that maiden bare
 Half lifeless up the rock;
 On his strong shoulder lean'd her head,
 And down her long dark tresses shed,
 As the wild vine in tendrils spread,
 Droops from the motintain oak.
 Him follow'd close that elder Lord,
 And in his hand a sheathed sword,
 Such as few arms could wield;
 But when he botn'd him to such task,
 Well could it cleave the strongest casque,
 And rend the surest shield.

XXIX.

The raised portcullis' arch they pass,
 The wicket with its bars of brass,
 The entrance long and low,
 Flank'd at each turn by loop-holes strait,
 Where bowmen might in ambush wait,
 (If force or fraud should burst the gate),
 To gall an entering foe.
 But every jealous post of ward
 Was now defenceless and unbarr'd,
 And all the passage free
 To one low-brow'd and vaulted room,
 Where squire and yeoman, page and groom,
 Plied their loud revelry.

XXX.

And “Rest ye here,” the Warder bade;
 “Till to our Lord your suit is said.—
 And, comrades, gaze not on the maid,
 And on these men who ask our aid,
 As if ye ne'er had seen
 A damsel tired of midnight bark,
 Or wanderers of a moulding stark,
 And bearing martial mien.”

But not for Eachin's reproof
Would page or vassal stand aloof,
But crowded on to stare,
As men of courtesy untaught,
Till fiery Edward roughly caught,
From one, the foremost there,
His chequer'd plaid, and in its shroud,
To hide her from the vulgar crowd,
Involved his sister fair.
His brother, as the clansman bent
His sullen brow in discontent,
Made brief and stern excuse;—
"Vassal, were thine the cloak of pall
That decks thy lord in bridal hall,
'Twere honour'd by her use."

XXXI.

Proud was his tone, but calm; his eye
Had that compelling dignity,
His mien that bearing haught and high,
Which common spirits fear;
Needed no word nor signal more,
Nod, wink, and laughter, all were o'er;
Upon each other back they bore,
And gazed like startled deer.
But now appear'd the Seneschal,
Commission'd by his lord to call
The strangers to the Baron's hall,
Where feasted fair and free
That Island Prince in nuptial tide,
With Edith there his lovely bride,
And her bold brother by her side,
And many a chief, the flower and pride
Of Western land and sea.

Here pause we, gentles, for a space;
And, if our tale hath won your grace,
Grant us brief patience, and again,
We will renew the minstrel strain.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

FILL the bright goblet, spread the festive board!
Summon the gay, the noble, and the fair!
Through the loud hall, in joyous concert pour'd,
Let mirth and music sound the dirge of Care!
But ask thou not if Happiness be there,
If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throe,
Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear;
Lift not the festal mask!—enough to know,
No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe.

II.

With beakers' clang, with harpers' lay,
With all that olden time deem'd gay,
The Island Chieftain feasted high;
But there was in his troubled eye
A gloomy fire, and on his brow
Now sudden flush'd, and faded now,
Emotions such as draw their birth
From deeper source than festal mirth.
By fits he paused, and harper's strain
And jester's tale went round in vain,
Or fell but on his idle ear
Like distant sounds which dreamers hear.
Then would he rouse him, and employ
Each art to aid the clamorous joy,
And call for pledge and lay,
And, for brief space, of all the crowd,
As he was loudest of the loud,
Seem gayest of the gay.

III.

Yet nought amiss the bridal throng
Mark'd in brief mirth, or musing long;
The vacant brow, the unlistening ear,
They gave to thoughts of raptures near,
And his fierce starts of sudden glee
Seem'd bursts of bridegroom's ecstasy.
Nor thus alone misjudged the crowd,
Since lofty Lorn, suspicious, proud,
And jealous of his honour'd line,
And that keen knight, De Argentine,*

* Note 10.

(From England sent on errand high,
The western league more firm to tie,)
Both deem'd in Ronald's mood to find
A lover's transport-troubled mind.
But one sad heart, one tearful eye,
Pierced deeper through the mystery,
And watch'd, with agony and fear,
Her wayward bridegroom's varied cheer.

IV.

She watch'd—yet fear'd to meet his glance,
And he shunn'd hers;—till when by chance
They met, the point of foeman's lance
Had given a milder pang!
Beneath the intolerable smart
He writh'd;—then sternly mann'd his heart
To play his hard but destined part,
And from the table sprang.
“Fill me the mighty cup!”* he said,
“Erst own'd by royal Somerled:
Fill it, till on the studded brim
In burning gold the bubbles swim,
And every gem of varied shine
Glow doubly bright in rosy wine!
To you, brave Lord, and brother mine,
Of Lorn, this pledge I drink—
The Union of our House with thine,
By this fair bridal-link!”

V.

“Let it pass round!” quoth He of Lorn,
“And in good time—that winded horn
Must of the Abbot tell;
The laggard monk is come at last.”
Lord Ronald heard the bugle blast,
And on the floor at random cast,
The untasted goblet fell.
But when the Warder in his ear
Tells other news, his blither cheer
Returns like sun of May,
When through a thunder-cloud it beams!—
Lord of two hundred isles, he seems
As glad of brief delay,
As some poor criminal might feel,
When from the gibbet or the wheel
Respited for a day.

* Note 11.

VI.

"Brother of Lorn," with hurried voice
 He said, "and you, fair lords, rejoice!
 Here, to augment our glee,
 Come wandering knights from travel far,
 Well proved, they say, in strife of war,
 And tempest on the sea.—
 Ho! give them at your board such place
 As best their presences may grace,
 And bid them welcome free!"
 With solemn step, and silver wand,
 The Seneschal the presence scann'd
 Of these strange guests;* and well he knew
 How to assign their rank its due;
 For though the costly furs
 That erst had deck'd their caps were torn,
 And their gay robes were over-worn,
 And soil'd their gilded spurs,
 Yet such a high commanding grace
 Was in their mien and in their face,
 As suited best the princely dais,
 And royal canopy;
 And there he marshall'd them their place,
 First of that company.

VII.

Then lords and ladies spake aside,
 And angry looks the error chide,
 That gave to guests unnamed, unknown,
 A place so near their prince's throne;
 But Owen Erraught said—
 "For forty years a seneschal,
 To marshal guests in bower and hall
 Has been my honour'd trade.
 Worship and mirth to me are known,
 By look, by bearing, and by tone,
 Not by furr'd robe or broider'd zone;
 And 'gainst an oaken bough
 I'll gage my silver wand of state,
 That these three strangers oft have sate
 In higher place than now."

VIII.

"I, too," the aged Ferrand said,
 "Am qualified by minstrel trade
 Of rank and place to tell;—
 Mark'd ye the younger stranger's eye,
 My mates, how quick, how keen, how high,
 How fierce its flashes fell,

* Note 12.

Glancing among the noble rout
 As if to seek the noblest out,
 Because the owner might not brook
 On any save his peers to look?
 And yet it moves me more,
 That steady, calm, majestic brow,
 With which the elder chief even now
 Scann'd the gay presence o'er,
 Like being of superior kind,
 In whose high-toned impartial mind
 Degrees of mortal rank and state
 Seem objects of indifferent weight.
 The lady too—though, closely tied,
 The mantle veil both face and eye,
 Her motions' grace it could not hide,
 Nor could her form's fair symmetry."

IX.

Suspicious doubt and lordly scorn
 Lour'd on the haughty front of Lorn.
 From underneath his brows of pride,
 The stranger guests he sternly eyed,
 And whisper'd closely what the ear
 Of Argentine alone might hear;
 Then question'd, high and brief,
 If, in their voyage, aught they knew
 Of the rebellious Scottish crew,
 Who to Rath-Erin's shelter drew
 With Carrick's outlaw'd Chief? *
 And if, their winter's exile o'er,
 They harbour'd still by Ulster's shore,
 Or launch'd their galleys on the main,
 To vex their native land again?

X.

That younger stranger, fierce and high,
 At once confronts the Chieftain's eye
 With look of equal scorn;—
 "Of rebels have we nought to show;
 But if of royal Bruce thou'dst know,
 I warn thee he has sworn,
 Ere thrice three days shall come and go,
 His banner Scottish winds shall blow,
 Despite each mean or mighty foe,
 From England's every bill and bow,
 To Allaster of Lorn."

* Note 13.

Kindled the mountain Chieftain's ire,
 But Ronald quench'd the rising fire:—
 "Brother, it better suits the time
 To chase the night with Ferrand's rhyme,
 Than wake, 'midst mirth and wine, the jars
 That flow from these unhappy wars."—
 "Content," said Lorn; and spoke apart
 With Ferrand, master of his art,
 Then whisper'd Argentine,—
 "The lay I named will carry smart
 To these bold strangers' haughty heart,
 If right this guess of mine."
 He ceased, and it was silence all,
 Until the minstrel waked the hall.

XI.

*The Brooch of Lorn.**

"Whence the brooch of burning gold,
 That clasps the Chieftain's mantle-fold,
 Wrought and chased with rare device.
 Studded fair with gems of price,
 On the varied tartans beaming,
 As, through night's pale rainbow gleaming,
 Fainter now, now seen afar,
 Fitful shines the northern star?

"Gem! ne'er wrought on Highland mountain,
 Did the fairy of the fountain,
 Or the mermaid of the wave,
 Frame thee in some coral cave?
 Did, in Iceland's darksome mine,
 Dwarf's swart hands thy metal twine?
 Or, mortal-moulded, comest thou here,
 From England's love, or France's fear?

XII.

Song continued.

"No!—thy splendours nothing tell
 Foreign art or faëry spell.
 Moulded thou for monarch's use,
 By the overweening Bruce,
 When the royal robe he tied
 O'er a heart of wrath and pride;
 Thence in triumph wert thou torn,
 By the victor hand of Lorn!

* Note 15.

“When the gem was won and lost,
Widely was the war-cry toss’d!
Rung aloud Bendouran fell,
Answer’d Douchart’s sounding dell,
Fled the deer from wild Teyndrum,
When the homicide, o’ercome,
Hardly ’scaped with scathe and scorn,
Left the pledge with conquering Lorn!

XIII.

Song concluded.

“Vain was then the Douglas brand,
Vain the Campbell’s vaunted hand,
Vain Kirkpatrick’s bloody dirk,*
Making sure of murder’s work;
Barendown fled fast away,
Fled the fiery De la Haye,†
When this brooch, triumphant borne,
Beam’d upon the breast of Lorn.

“Farthest fled its former Lord,
Left his men to brand and cord,
Bloody brand of Highland steel,
English gibbet, axe, and wheel.
Let him fly from coast to coast,
Dogg’d by Comyn’s vengeful ghost,
While his spoils, in triumph worn,
Long shall grace victorious Lorn!”

XIV.

As glares the tiger on his foes,
Hemm’d in by hunters, spears, and bows,
And, ere he bounds upon the ring,
Selects the object of his spring,—
Now on the Bard, now on his Lord,
So Edward glared and grasp’d his sword—
But stern his brother spoke,—“Be still.
What! art thou yet so wild of will,
After high deeds and sufferings long,
To chafe thee for a menial’s song?—
Well hast thou framed, Old Man, thy strains,‡
To praise the hand that pays thy pains!
Yet something might thy song have told
Of Lorn’s three vassals, true and bold,
Who rent their Lord from Bruce’s hold,
As underneath his knee he lay,
And died to save him in the fray.

* Note 16.

† Note 17.

‡ Note 18.

I've heard the Bruce's cloak and clasp
 Was clench'd within their dying grasp,
 What time a hundred foemen more
 Rush'd in, and back the victor bore,
 Long after Lorn had left the strife,
 Full glad to 'scape with limb and life.—
 Enough of this—And, Minstrel, hold,
 As minstrel-hire, this chain of gold,
 For future lays a fair excuse,
 To speak more nobly of the Bruce.”—

XV.

“Now, by Columba's shrine, I swear,
 And every saint that's buried there,
 'Tis he himself!” Lorn sternly cries,
 “And for my kinsman's death he dies.”
 As loudly Ronald calls—“Forbear!
 Not in my sight while brand I wear,
 O'ermatch'd by odds, shall warrior fall
 Or blood of stranger stain my hall!
 This ancient fortress of my race
 Shall be misfortune's resting-place,
 Shelter and shield of the distress'd,
 No slaughter-house for shipwreck'd guests.”
 “Talk not to me,” fierce Lorn replied,
 “Of odds or match!—when Comyn died,
 Three daggers clash'd within his side!
 Talk not to me of sheltering hall,
 The Church of God saw Comyn fall!
 On God's own altar stream'd his blood,
 While o'er my prostrate kinsman stood
 The ruthless murderer—e'en as now—
 With arm'd hand and scornful brow.—
 Up, all who love me! blow on blow!
 And lay the outlaw'd felons low!”

XVI.

Then up sprang many a mainland Lord,
 Obedient to their Chieftain's word.
 Barcaldine's arm is high in air,
 And Kinloch-Alline's blade is bare,
 Black Murthok's dirk has left its sheath,
 And clench'd is Dermid's hand of death.
 Their mutter'd threats of vengeance swell
 Into a wild and warlike yell;
 Onward they press with weapons high,
 The affrighted females shriek and fly,
 And, Scotland, then thy brightest ray
 Had darken'd ere its noon of day,

But every chief of birth and fame,
That from the Isles of Ocean came,
At Ronald's side that hour withstood
Fierce Lorn's relentless thirst for blood.

XVII.

Brave Torquil from Dunvegan high,
Lord of the misty hills of Skye,
Mac-Niel, wild Bara's ancient thane,
Duart, of bold Clan-Gillian's strain,
Fergus, of Canna's castled bay,
Mac-Duffith, Lord of Colonsay,
Soon as they saw the broadswords glance,
With ready weapons rose at once,
More prompt, that many an ancient feud,
Full oft suppress'd, full oft renew'd,
Glow'd 'twixt the chieftains of Argyle,
And many a lord of ocean's isle.
Wild was the scene—each sword was bare,
Back stream'd each chieftain's shaggy hair,
In gloomy opposition set,
Eyes, hands, and brandish'd weapons met;
Blew gleaming o'er the social board,
Flash'd to the torches many a sword;
And soon those bridal lights may shine
On purple blood for rosy wine.

XVIII.

While thus for blows and death prepared,
Each heart was up, each weapon bared,
Each foot advanced,—a surly pause
Still revered hospitable laws.
All menaced violence, but alike
Reluctant each the first to strike.
(For aye accursed in minstrel line
Is he who brawls 'mid song and wine.)
And, match'd in numbers and in might,
Doubtful and desperate seem'd the fight.
Thus threat and murmur died away,
Till on the crowded hall there lay
Such silence, as the deadly still,
Ere bursts the thunder on the hill.
With blade advanced, each Chieftain bold
Show'd like the Swarder's form of old,
As wanting still the torch of life.
To wake the marble into strife.

XIX.

That awful pause the stranger maid,
 And Edith, seized to pray for aid.
 As to De Argentine she clung,
 Away her veil the stranger flung,
 And, lovely 'mid her wild despair,
 Fast stream'd her eyes, wide flow'd her hair;—
 "O thou, of knighthood once the flower,
 Sure refuge in distressful hour,
 Thou, who in Judah well hast fought
 For our dear faith, and oft has sought
 Renown in knightly exercise,
 When this poor hand has dealt the prize,
 Say, can thy soul of honour brook
 On the unequal strife to look,
 When, butcher'd thus in peaceful hall
 Those once thy friends, my brethren, fall!"
 To Argentine she turn'd her word,
 But her eye sought the Island Lord.
 A flush like evening's setting flame
 Glow'd on his cheek; his hardy frame,
 As with a brief convulsion, shook:
 With hurried voice and eager look,—
 "Fear not," he said, "my Isabel!
 What said I—Edith!—all is well—
 Nay, fear not—I will well provide
 The safety of my lovely bride—
 My bride?"—but there the accents clung
 In tremor to his faltering tongue.

XX.

Now rose De Argentine, to claim
 The prisoners in his sovereign's name,
 To England's crown, who, vassals sworn,
 'Gainst their liege lord had weapon borne—
 (Such speech, I ween, was but to hide
 His care their safety to provide;
 For knight more true in thought and deed
 Than Argentine ne'er spurr'd a steed)—
 And Ronald, who his meaning guess'd,
 Seem'd half to sanction the request.
 This purpose fiery Torquil broke:—
 "Somewhat we've heard of England's yoke,"
 He said, "and in our islands, Fame
 Hath whisper'd of a lawful claim,
 That calls the Bruce fair Scotland's Lord,
 Though dispossess'd by foreign sword.
 This craves reflection—but though right
 And just the charge of England's Knight,

Let England's crown her rebels seize
Where she has power;—in towers like these,
'Midst Scottish Chieftains summon'd here
To bridal mirth and bridal cheer,
Be sure, with no consent of mine,
Shall either Lorn or Argentine
With chains or violence, in our sight,
Oppress a brave and banish'd Knight."

XXI.

Then waked the wild debate again,
With brawling threat and clamour vain.
Vassals and menials, thronging in,
Lent their brute rage to swell the din;
When, far and wide, a bugle-clang
From the dark ocean upward rang.
"The Abbot comes!" they cry at once,
"The holy man, whose favour'd glance
Hath sainted visions known;
Angels have met him on the way,
Beside the blessed martyr's bay,
And by Columba's stone.
His monks have heard their hymnings high
Sound from the summit of Dun-Y,
To cheer his penance lone,
When at each cross, on girth and wold,
(Their number thrice a hundred-fold),
His prayer he made, his beads he told,
With Aves many a one—
He comes our feuds to reconcile,
A sainted man from sainted isle;
We will his holy doom abide,
The Abbot shall our strife decide."

XXII.

Scarcely this fair accord was o'er,
When through the wide revolving door
The black-stol'd brethren wind;
Twelve sandall'd monks, who relics bore,
With many a torch-bearer before,
And many a cross behind.
Then sunk each fierce uplifted hand,
And dagger bright and flashing brand
Dropp'd swiftly at the sight;
They vanish'd from the Churchman's eye,
As shooting stars, that glance and die,
Dart from the vault of night.

XXIII.

The Abbot on the threshold stood,
 And in his hand the holy rood;
 Back on his shoulders flow'd his hood,
 The torch's glaring ray
 Show'd in its red and flashing light,
 His wither'd cheek and amice white,
 His blue eye glistening cold and bright,
 His tresses scant and gray.
 "Fair Lords," he said, "Our Lady's love,
 And peace be with you from above,
 And Benedicite!—
 —But what means this?—no peace is here!
 Do dirks unsheathed suit bridal cheer?
 Or are these naked brands
 A seemly show for Churchman's sight,
 When he comes summon'd to unite
 Betrothed hearts and hands?"

XXIV.

Then, cloaking hate with fiery zeal,
 Proud Lorn first answer'd the appeal;—
 "Thou comest, O holy Man,
 True sons of blessed church to greet,
 But little deeming here to meet
 A wretch, beneath the ban
 Of Pope and Church, for murder done
 Even on the sacred altar-stone—
 Well may'st thou wonder we should know
 Such miscreant here, nor lay him low,
 Or dream of greeting, peace, or truce,
 With excommunicated Bruce!
 Yet well I grant to end debate,
 Thy sainted voice decide his fate."

XXV.

Then Ronald pled the stranger's cause,
 And knighthood's oath and honour's laws;
 And Isabel, on bended knee,
 Brought pray'rs and tears to back the plea:
 And Edith lent her generous aid,
 And wept, and Lorn for mercy pray'd.
 "Hence," he exclaim'd, "degenerate maid!
 Was't not enough, to Ronald's bower *
 I brought thee, like a paramour,
 Or bond-maid at her master's gate,
 His careless cold approach to wait?—

* Note 19.

But the bold Lord of Cumberland;
The gallant Clifford, seeks thy hand;
His it shall be—Nay, no reply!
Hence! till those rebel eyes be dry.”
With grief the Abbot heard and saw,
Yet nought relax’d his brow of awe.

XXVI.

Then Argentine, in England’s name,
So highly urged his sovereign’s claim,
He wak’d a spark, that, long suppress’d,
Had smoulder’d in Lord Ronald’s breast;
And now, as from the flint the fire,
Flash’d forth at once his generous ire.
“Enough of noble blood,” he said,
“By English Edward had been shed,
Since matchless Wallace first had been *
In mock’ry crown’d with wreaths of green,
And done to death by felon hand,
For guarding well his father’s land.
Where’s Nigel Bruce? and De la Haye, †
And valiant Seton—where are they?
Where Somerville, the kind and free?
And Fraser, flower of chivalry?
Have they not been on gibbet bound,
Their quarters flung to hawk and hound,
And hold we here a cold debate,
To yield more victims to their fate?
What! can the English Leopard’s mood
Never be gorged with Northern blood?
Was not the life of Athole shed, ‡
To soothe the tyrant’s sicken’d bed?
And must his word, till dying day,
Be nought but quarter, hang, and slay!—§
Thou frown’st, De Argentine,—My gage
Is prompt to prove the strife I wage.”—

XXVII.

“Nor deem,” said stout Dunvegan’s knight,
“That thou shalt brave alone the fight!
By saints of isle and mainland both;
By Woden wild (my grandsire’s oath); ||
Let Rome and England do their worst,
Howe’er attainted or accurs’d,
If Bruce shall e’er find friends again,
Once more to brave a battle-plain,
If Douglas couch again his lance,
Or Randolph dare another chance,

* Note 20.

† Note 21.

‡ Note 22.

§ Note 23.

|| Note 24.

Old Torquil will not be to lack
 With twice a thousand at his back.—
 Nay, chafe not at my bearing bold,
 Good Abbot! for thou know'st of old,
 Torquil's rude thought and stubborn will
 Smack of the wild Norwegian still;
 Nor will I barter Freedom's cause
 For England's wealth, or Rome's applause."

XXVIII.

The Abbot seem'd with eye severe
 The hardy Chieftain's speech to hear;
 Then on King Robert turn'd the Monk,
 But twice his courage came and sunk,
 Confronted with the hero's look;
 Twice fell his eye, his accents shook;
 At length, resolved in tone and brow,
 Sternly he question'd him—"And thou,
 Unhappy! what hast thou to plead,
 Why I denounce not on thy deed
 That awful doom which canons tell
 Shuts paradise, and opens hell;
 Anathema of power so dread,
 It blends the living with the dead,
 Bids each good angel soar away,
 And every ill one claim his prey;
 Expels thee from the church's care,*
 And deafens Heaven against thy prayer;
 Arms every hand against thy life,
 Bans all who aid thee in the strife,
 Nay, each whose succour, cold and scant,
 With meanest alms relieves thy want;
 Haunts thee while living,—and, when dead,
 Dwells on thy yet devoted head,
 Rends Honour's scutcheon from thy hearse,
 Stills o'er thy bier the holy verse,
 And spurns thy corpse from hallow'd ground,
 Flung like vile carrion to the hound;
 Such is the dire and desperate doom
 For sacrilege, decreed by Rome;
 And such the well-deserved meed
 Of thine unhallow'd, ruthless deed."—

XXIX.

"Abbot!" the Bruce replied, "thy charge
 It boots not to dispute at large.
 This much, howe'er, I bid thee know,
 No selfish vengeance dealt the blow,
 For Comyn died his country's foe.

* Note 25.

Nor blame I friends whose ill-timed speed
 Fulfill'd by soon-repent'd deed,
 Nor censure those from whose stern tongue
 The dire anathema has rung.
 I only blame mine own wild ire,
 By Scotland's wrongs incensed to fire.
 Heaven knows my purpose to atone,
 Far as I may, the evil done,
 And hears a penitent's appeal
 From papal curse and prelate's zeal.
 My first and dearest task achieved,
 Fair Scotland from her thrall relieved,
 Shall many a priest in cope and stole
 Say requiem for Red Comyn's soul,
 While I the blessed cross advance,*
 And expiate this unhappy chance
 In Palestine, with sword and lance.
 But, while content the Church should know
 My conscience owns the debt I owe,
 Unto De Argentine and Lorn
 The name of traitor I return,
 Bid them defiance stern and high,
 And give them in their throats the lie!
 These brief words spoke, I speak no more.
 Do what thou wilt; my shrift is o'er."

XXX.

Like man by prodigy amazed,
 Upon the King the Abbot gazed;
 Then o'er his pallid features glance,
 Convulsions of ecstatic trance.
 His breathing came more thick and fast,
 And from his pale blue eyes were cast
 Strange rays of wild and wandering light;
 Uprise his locks of silver white,
 Flush'd is his brow, through every vein
 In azure tide the currents strain,
 And undistinguished accents broke
 The awful silence ere he spoke.

XXXI.

"De Bruce! I rose with purpose dread †
 To speak my curse upon thy head,
 And give thee as an outcast o'er
 To him who burns to shed thy gore;—
 But, like the Midianite of old,
 Who stood on Zophim, Heaven-controll'd,‡

* Note 26.

† Note 27.

‡ See the Book of NUMBERS, chap. xxiii. and xxiv.

I feel within mine aged breast
 A power that will not be repress'd.
 It prompts my voice, it swells my veins,
 It burns, it maddens, it constrains!—
 De Bruce, thy sacrilegious blow
 Hath at God's altar slain thy foe:
 O'ermaster'd yet by high behest,
 I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!"
 He spoke, and o'er the astonish'd throng
 Was silence, awful, deep, and long.

XXXII.

Again that light has fired his eye,
 Again his form swells bold and high,
 The broken voice of age is gone,
 'Tis vigorous manhood's lofty tone:—
 "Thrice vanquish'd on the battle-plain,
 Thy followers slaughter'd, fled, or ta'en,
 A hunted wanderer on the wild,*
 On foreign shores a man exiled,
 Disown'd, deserted, and distress'd,
 I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!
 Bless'd in the hall and in the field,
 Under the mantle as the shield.
 Avenger of thy country's shame,
 Restorer of her injured fame,
 Bless'd in thy sceptre and thy sword,
 De Bruce, fair Scotland's rightful Lord,
 Bless'd in thy deeds and in thy fame,
 What lengthen'd honours wait thy name!
 In distant ages, sire to son
 Shall tell thy tale of freedom won,
 And teach his infants, in the use
 Of earliest speech, to falter Bruce.
 Go, then, triumphant! sweep along
 Thy course, the theme of many a song!
 The Power, whose dictates swell my breast,
 Hath bless'd thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!—
 Enough—my short lived strength decays,
 And sinks the momentary blaze.—
 Heaven hath our destined purpose broke,
 Not here must nuptial vow be spoke;
 Brethren, our errand here is o'er,
 Our task discharged.—Unmoor, unmoor!"—
 His priests received the exhausted Monk,
 As breathless in their arms he sunk.
 Punctual his orders to obey,
 The train refused all longer stay,
 Embark'd, raised sail, and bore away.

* Note 28.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

HAST thou not mark'd, when o'er thy startled head
Sudden and deep the thunder-peal has roll'd,
How when its echoes fell, a silence dead
Sunk on the wood, the meadow, and the wold?
The rye-grass shakes not on the sod-built fold,
The rustling aspen's leaves are mute and still,
The wall-flower waves not on the ruin'd hold,
Till, murmuring distant first, then near and shrill,
The savage whirlwind wakes, and sweeps the groaning hill.

II.

Artornish! such a silence sunk
Upon thy halls, when that grey Monk
His prophet-speech had spoke;
And his obedient brethren's sail
Was stretch'd to meet the southern gale
Before a whisper woke.
Then murmuring sounds of doubt and fear,
Close pour'd in many an anxious ear,
The solemn stillness broke;
And still they gazed with eager guess,
Where, in an oriel's deep recess,
The Island Prince seem'd bent to press
What Lorn, by his impatient cheer,
And gesture fierce, scarce deign'd to hear.

III.

Starting at length with frowning look,
His hand he clench'd, his head he shook,
And sternly flung apart;—
“And deem'st thou me so mean of mood,
As to forget the mortal feud,
And clasp the hand with blood imbrued
From my dear Kinsman's heart?
Is this thy rede?—a due return
For ancient league and friendship sworn!
But well our mountain proverb shows
The faith of Islesmen ebbs and flows.
Be it even so—believe, ere long,
He that now bears shall wreak the wrong.—
Call Edith—call the Maid of Lorn!
My sister, slaves!—for further scorn,

Be sure nor she nor I will stay.—
 Away, De Argentine, away!—
 We nor ally nor brother know,
 In Bruce's friend, or England's foe."

IV.

But who the Chieftain's rage can tell,
 When, sought from lowest dungeon cell
 To highest tower the castle round,
 No Lady Edith was there found!
 He shouted—"Falsehood!—treachery!—
 Revenge and blood!—a lordly meed
 To him that will avenge the deed!
 A Baron's lands!"—His frantic mood
 Was scarcely by the news withstood,
 That Morag shared his sister's flight,
 And that, in hurry of the night,
 'Scaped noteless, and without remark,
 Two strangers sought the Abbot's bark.—
 "Man every galley!—fly—pursue!
 The priest his treachery shall rue!
 Ay, and the time shall quickly come,
 When we shall hear the thanks that Rome
 Will pay his feigned prophecy!"
 Such was fierce Lorn's indignant cry;
 And Cormac Doil in haste obey'd,
 Hoisted his sail, his anchor weigh'd,
 (For, glad of each pretext for spoil,
 A pirate sworn was Cormac Doil.)—*
 But others, lingering, spoke apart,—
 "The maid has given her maiden heart
 To Ronald of the Isles,
 And, fearful lest her brother's word
 Bestow her on that English Lord,
 She seeks Iona's piles,
 And wisely deems it best to dwell
 A votaress in the holy cell,
 Until these feuds so fierce and fell
 The Abbot reconciles."

V.

As, impotent of ire, the hall
 Echoed to Lorn's impatient call—
 "My, horse, my mantle, and my train!
 Let none who honours Lorn remain!"—
 Courteous, but stern, a bold request
 To Bruce De Argentine express'd:—
 "Lord Earl," he said,—“I cannot chuse
 But yield such title to the Bruce,

* Note 29.

Though name and earldom both are gone,
Since he braced rebel's armour on—
But, Earl or Serf—rude phrase was thine
Of late, and launch'd at Argentine;
Such as compels me to demand
Redress of honour at thy hand.
We need not to each other tell,
That both can wield their weapons well;
Then do me but the soldier grace,
This glove upon thy helm to place
Where we may meet in fight;
And I will say, as still I've said,
Though by ambition far misled,
Thou art a noble knight."

VI.

"And I," the princely Bruce replied,
"Might term it stain on knighthood's pride,
That the bright sword of Argentine
Should in a tyrant's quarrel shine;
But, for your brave request,
Be sure the honour'd pledge you gave
In every battle-field shall wave
Upon my helmet-crest;
Believe, that if my hasty tongue
Hath done thine honour causeless wrong,
It shall be well redress'd.
Not dearer to my soul was glove,
Bestow'd in youth by lady's love,
Than this which thou hast given!
Thus, then, my noble foe I greet;
Health and high fortune till we meet,
And then—what pleases Heaven."

VII.

Thus parted they—for now, with sound
Like waves roll'd back from rocky ground,
The friends of Lorn retire;
Each mainland chieftain, with his train,
Draws to his mountain towers again,
Pondering how mortal schemes prove vain,
And mortal hopes expire.
But through the castle double guard,
By Ronald's charge, kept wakeful ward,
Wicket and gate were trebly barr'd,
By beam and bolt and chain;
Then of the guests, in courteous sort,
He pray'd excuse for mirth broke short,
And bade them in Artornish fort
In confidence remain.

Now torch and menial tendance led
 Chieftain and knight to bower and bed,
 And heads were told, and Aves said,
 And soon they sunk away
 Into such sleep as wont to shed
 Oblivion on the weary head,
 After a toilsome day,

VIII.

But soon uproused, the Monarch cried
 To Edward slumbering by his side,
 "Awake, or sleep for aye!
 Even now there jarr'd a secret door—
 A taper-light gleams on the floor—
 Up, Edward! up, I say!
 Some one glides in like midnight ghost
 Nay, strike not! 'tis our noble Host."
 Advancing then his taper's flame,
 Ronald stept forth, and with him came
 Dunvegan's chief—each bent the knee
 To Bruce in sign of fealty,
 And proffer'd him his sword,
 And hail'd him, in a monarch's style,
 As king of mainland and of isle,
 And Scotland's rightful lord.
 "And O," said Ronald, "Own'd of Heaven!
 Say, is my erring youth forgiven,
 By falsehoods hearts from duty driven,
 Who rebel falchion drew,
 Yet ever to thy deeds of fame,
 Even while I strove against thy claim,
 Paid homage just and true?"—
 "Alas! dear youth, the unhappy time," *
 Answer'd the Bruce, "must bear the crime,
 Since, guiltier far than you,
 Even I"—he paused; for Falkirk's woes,
 Upon his conscious soul arose.
 The Chieftain to his breast he press'd,
 And in a sigh conceal'd the rest.

IX.

They proffer'd aid, by arms and might,
 To repossess him in his right;
 But well their counsels must be weigh'd,
 Ere banners raised and musters made,
 For English hire and Lorn's intrigues
 Bound many chiefs in southern leagues.

* Note 30.

In answer, Bruce his purpose bold
 To his new vassals frankly told:—
 “The winter worn in exile o’er,
 I long’d for Carrick’s kindred shore.
 I thought upon my native Ayr,
 And long’d to see the burly fare
 That Clifford makes, whose lordly call
 Now echoes through my father’s hall.
 But first my course to Arran led,
 Where valiant Lennox gathers head,
 And on the sea, by tempest toss’d,
 Our barks dispersed, our purpose cross’d,
 Mine own, a hostile sail to shun,
 Far from her destin’d course had run,
 When that wise will, which masters ours,
 Compell’d us to your friendly towers.”

X.

Then Torquil spoke:—“The time craves speed!
 We must not linger in our deed,
 But instant pray our Sovereign Liege,
 To shun the perils of a siege.
 The vengeful Lorn, with all his powers,
 Lies but too near Artornish towers,
 And England’s light-arm’d vessels ride,
 Not distant far, the waves of Clyde.
 Prompt at these tidings to unmoor,
 And sweep each strait, and guard each shore,
 Then, till this fresh alarm pass by,
 Secret and safe my liege must lie
 In the far bounds of friendly Skye,
 Torquil thy pilot and thy guide.”—
 “Not so, brave Chieftain,” Ronald cried;
 “Myself will on my Sovereign wait.
 And raise in arms the men of Sleate,
 Whilst thou, renown’d where chiefs debate,
 Shalt sway their souls by council sage,
 And awe them by thy locks of age.”
 —“And if my words in weight shall fail,
 This ponderous sword shall turn the scale.”

XI.

“The scheme,” said Bruce, “contents me well;
 Meantime, ’twere best that Isabel,
 For safety, with my bark and crew,
 Again to friendly Erin drew.
 There Edward, too, shall with her wend,
 In need to cheer her and defend,
 And muster up each scatter’d friend.”—

Here seem'd it as Lord Ronald's ear
 Would other counsel gladlier hear;
 But, all achieved as soon as plann'd,
 Both barks, in secret, arm'd and mann'd,
 From out the haven bore;
 On different voyage forth they ply,
 This for the coast of winged Skye,
 And that for Erin's shore.

XII.

With Bruce and Ronald bides the tale.—
 To favouring winds they gave the sail,
 Till Mull's dark headlands scarce they knew,
 And Ardnamurchan's hills were blue.
 But then the squalls blew close and hard,
 And, fain to strike the galley's yard,
 And take them to the oar,
 With these rude seas, in weary plight,
 They strove the livelong day and night,
 Nor till the dawning had a sight
 Of Skye's romantic shore.
 Where Coolin stoops him to the west,
 They saw upon his shiver'd crest
 The sun's arising gleam;
 But such the labour and delay,
 Ere they were moor'd in Scavigh bay,
 (For calmer Heaven compell'd to stay,)
 He shot a western beam.
 Then Ronald said, "If true mine eye,
 These are the savage wilds that lie *
 North of Strathnardill and Dunsbye;
 No human foot comes here,
 And, since these adverse breezes blow,
 If my good Liege love hunter's bow,
 What hinders that on land we go,
 And strike a mountain deer?
 Allan, my page, shall with us wend,
 A bow full deftly can he bend,
 And, if we meet a herd, may send
 A shaft shall mend our cheer."
 Then each took bow and bolts in hand,
 Their row-boat launch'd and leapt to land,
 And left their skiff and train,
 Where a wild stream with headlong shock,
 Came brawling down its bed of rock,
 To mingle with the main.

* Note 31.

XIII.

A while their route they silent made,
 As men who stalk for mountain-deer,
 Till the good Bruce to Ronald said,—
 “Saint Mary! what a scene is here!
 I’ve traversed many a mountain-strand,
 Abroad and in my native land,
 And it has been my lot to tread
 Where safety more than pleasure led;
 Thus, many a waste I’ve wander’d o’er,
 Clombe many a crag, cross’d many a moor,
 But, by my halidome,
 A scene so rude, so wild as this,
 Yet so sublime in barrenness,
 Ne’er did my wandering footsteps press,
 Where’er I happ’d to roam.”

XIV.

No marvel thus the Monarch spake;
 For rarely human eye has known
 A scene so stern as that dread lake,
 With its dark ledge of barren stone.
 Seems that primeval earthquake’s sway
 Hath rent a strange and shatter’d way
 Through the rude bosom of the hill,
 And that each naked precipice,
 Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
 Tells of the outrage still.
 The wildest glen, but this, can show
 Some touch of Nature’s genial glow;
 On high Benmore green mosses grow,
 And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,
 And copse on Cruchán-Ben;
 But here,—above, around, below,
 On mountain or in glen,
 Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
 Nor aught of vegetative power,
 The weary eye may ken.
 For all is rocks at random thrown,
 Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
 As if were here denied
 The summer sun, the spring’s sweet due,
 That clothe with many a varied hue
 The bleakest mountain-side.

XV.

And wilder, forward as they wound,
 Were the proud cliffs and lake profound.

Huge terraces of granite black
 Afforded rude and cumber'd track;
 For from the mountain hoar,
 Hurl'd headlong in some night of fear,
 When yell'd the wolf and fled the deer,
 Loose crags had toppled o'er;
 And some, chance-poised and balanced, lay,
 So that a stripping arm might sway
 A mass no host could raise,
 In Nature's rage at random thrown,
 Yet trembling like the Druid's stone
 On its precarious base.
 The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
 Now clothed the mountains' lofty range,
 Now left their foreheads bare,
 And round the skirts their mantle furl'd,
 Or on the sable waters curl'd,
 Or on the eddying breezes whirl'd,
 Dispersed in middle air.
 And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
 When, brief and fierce, the mountain shower
 Pours like a torrent down,
 And when return the sun's glad beams,
 Whiten'd with foam a thousand streams
 Leap from the mountain's crown.

XVI.

"This lake," said Bruce, "whose barriers drear
 Are precipices sharp and sheer,
 Yielding no track for goat or deer,
 Save the black shelves we tread,
 How term you its dark waves? and how
 Yon northern mountain's pathless brow,
 And yonder peak of dread,
 That to the evening sun uplifts
 The griesly gulfs and slaty rifts,
 Which seam its shiver'd head?"—
 "Coriskin call the dark lake's name,
 Coolin the ridge, as bards proclaim,
 From old Cuchullin, chief of fame.
 But bards, familiar in our isles
 Rather with Nature's frowns than smiles,
 Full oft their careless humours please
 By sportive names from scenes like these.
 I would old Torquil were to show
 His maidens with their breasts of snow,
 Or that my noble Liege were nigh
 To hear his Nurse sing lullaby!

(The Maids—tall cliffs with breakers white,
The Nurse—a torrent's roaring might),
Or that your eye could see the mood
Of Corryvreckin's whirlpool rude,
When dons the Hag her whiten'd hood—
'Tis thus our islemen's fancy frames,
For scenes so stern, fantastic names."

XVII.

Answer'd the Bruce, "And musing mind
Might here a graver moral find.
These mighty cliffs, that heave on high
Their naked brows to middle sky,
Indifferent to the sun or snow,
Where nought can fade, and nought can blow,
May they not mark a Monarch's fate,—
Raised high 'mid storms of strife and state,
Beyond life's lowlier pleasures placed,
His soul a rock, his heart a waste?
O'er hope and love and fear aloft
High rears his crown'd head—But soft!
Look, underneath yon jutting crag
Are hunters and a slaughter'd stag.
Who may they be? But late you said
No steps these desert regions tread?"—

XVIII.

"So said I—and believed in sooth,"
Ronald replied, "I spoke the truth.
Yet now I spy, by yonder stone,
Five men—they mark us, and come on;
And by their badge on bonnet borne,
I guess them of the land of Lorn,
Foes to my liege.—"So let it be;
I've faced worse odds than five to three—
—But the poor page can little aid;
Then be our battle thus array'd,
If our free passage they contest;
Cope thou with two, I'll match the rest."—
"Not so, my Liege—for, by my life,
This sword shall meet the treble strife;
My strength, my skill in arms, more small,
And less the loss should Ronald fall.
But islemen soon to soldiers grow,—
Allan has sword as well as bow,
And were my Monarch's order given,
Two shafts should make our number even."—

"No! not to save my life!" he said;
 "Enough of blood rests on my head,
 Too rashly spill'd—we soon shall know.
 Whether they came as friend or foe."

XIX.

Nigh came the strangers, and more nigh;—
 Still less they pleased the Monarch's eye.
 Men were they all of evil mien,*
 Down-look'd, unwilling to be seen;
 They mov'd with half-resolved pace,
 And bent on earth each gloomy face.
 The foremost two were fair arrayed,
 With brogue and bonnet, trews and plaid,
 And bore the arms of mountaineers,
 Daggers and broadswords, bows and spears.
 The three, that lagg'd small space behind,
 Seem'd serfs of more degraded kind;
 Goat-skins or deer-hides o'er them cast,
 Made a rude fence against the blast;
 Their arms and feet and heads were bare,
 Matted their beards, unshorn their hair;
 For arms, the caitiffs bore in hand,
 A club, an axe, a rusty brand.

XX.

Onward still mute they kept the track;—
 "Tell who ye be, or else stand back,"
 Said Bruce; "In deserts when they meet,
 Men pass not as in peaceful street."
 Still, at his stern command, they stood,
 And proffer'd greeting brief and rude,
 But acted courtesy so ill,
 As seem'd of fear, and not of will.
 "Wanderers we are, as you may be;
 Men hither driven by wind and sea,
 Who, if you list to taste our cheer,
 Will share with you this fallow deer."—
 "If from the sea, where lies your bark?"
 "Ten fathom deep in ocean dark!
 Wreck'd yesternight: but we are mien,
 Who little sense of peril ken.
 The shades come down—the day is shut—
 Will you go with us to our hut?"—
 "Our vessel waits us in the bay;
 Thanks for your proffer—have good-day."

* Note 32.

"Was that your galley, then, which rode
Not far from shore when evening glow'd?"
"It was."—"Then spare your needless pain,
There will she now be sought in vain.
We saw her from the mountain head,
When, with St George's blazon red
A southern vessel bore in sight,
And yours raised sail, and took to flight."

XXI.

"Now, by the rood, unwelcome news!"
Thus with Lord Ronald communed Bruce:
"Nor rests there light enough to show,
If this their tale be true or no.
The men seem bred of churlish kind,
Yet mellow nuts have hardest rind;
We will go with them—food and fire
And sheltering roof our wants require.
Sure guard 'gainst treachery will we keep,
And watch by turns our comrades' sleep.—
Good fellows, thanks; your guests we'll be.
And well will pay the courtesy.
Come, lead us where your lodging lies,—
—Nay, soft! we mix not companies.—
Show us the path o'er crag and stone,
And we will follow you;—lead on."

XXII.

They reach'd the dreary cabin, made
Of sails against a rock display'd,
And there, on entering found
A slender boy, whose form and mien
Ill suited with such savage scene,
In cap and cloak of velvet green,
Low seated on the ground.
His garb was such as minstrels wear,
Dark was his hue, and dark his hair,
His youthful cheek was marr'd by care,
His eyes in sorrow drown'd.
"Whence this poor boy?"—As Ronald spoke,
The voice his trance of anguish broke;
As if awaked from ghastly dream,
He raised his head with start and scream,
And wildly gazed around;
Then to the wall his face he turn'd,
And his dark neck with blushes burn'd.

XXIII.

"Whose is the boy?" again he said.
"By chance of war our captive made;

He may be yours, if you should hold
 That music has more charms than gold;
 For, though from earliest childhood mute,
 The lad can deftly touch the lute,
 And on the rote and viol play,
 And well can drive the time away
 For those who love such glee;
 For me, the favouring breeze, when land
 It pipes upon the galley's shroud,
 Makes blither melody."—
 "Hath he, then, sense of spoken sound?"—
 "Aye; so his mother bade us know,
 A crone in our late shipwreck drown'd,
 And hence the silly stripling's woe.
 More of the youth I cannot say,
 Our captive but since yesterday;
 When wind and weather wax'd so grim,
 We little listed think of him.—
 But why waste time in idle words?
 Sit to your cheer—unbelt your swords."
 Sudden the captive turn'd his head,
 And one quick glance to Ronald sped.
 It was a keen and warning look,
 And well the Chief the signal took.

XXIV.

"Kind host," he said, "our needs require
 A separate board and separate fire;
 For know, that on a pilgrimage
 Wend I, my comrade, and this page.
 And, sworn to vigil and to fast,
 Long as this hallow'd task shall last,
 We never doff the plaid or sword,
 Or feast us at a stranger's board;
 And never share one common sleep,
 But one must still his vigil keep.
 Thus, for our separate use, good friend,
 We'll hold this hut's remoter end."—
 "A churlish vow," the elder said,
 "And hard, methinks, to be obey'd.
 How say you, if, to wreak the scorn
 That pays our kindness harsh return,
 We should refuse to share our meal?"—
 "Then say we, that our swords are steel!
 And our vow binds us not to fast,
 Where gold or force may buy repast."—
 Their host's dark brow grew keen and fell,
 His teeth are clench'd, his features swell;

Yet sunk the felon's moody ire
Before Lord Ronald's glance of fire,
Nor could his craven courage brook
The monarch's calm and dauntless look.
With laugh constrain'd—"Let every man
Follow the fashion of his clan!
Each to his separate quarters keep,
And feed or fast, or wake or sleep."

XXV.

Their fire at separate distance burns,
By turns they eat, keep guard by turns;
For evil seem'd that old man's eye,
Dark and designing, fierce yet shy.
Still he avoided forward look,
But slow, and circumspectly took
A circling, never-ceasing glance,
By doubt and cunning mark'd at once,
Which shot a mischief-boding ray,
From under eyebrows shagg'd and grey.
The younger, too, who seem'd his son,
Had that dark look the timid shun;
The half-clad serfs behind them sate,
And scowl'd a glare 'twixt fear and hate—
Till all, as darkness onward crept,
Couch'd down, and seem'd to sleep, or slept.
Nor he, that boy, whose powerless tongue
Must trust his eyes to wail his wrong,
A longer watch of sorrow made,
But stretch'd his limbs to slumber laid.

XXVI.

Not in his dangerous host confides
The King, but wary watch provides.
Ronald keeps ward till midnight past,
Then wakes the King, young Allan last;
Thus rank'd, to give the youthful page
The rest required by tender age.
What is Lord Ronald's wakeful thought,
To chase the languor toil had brought?—
(For deem not that he deign'd to throw
Much care upon such coward foe,)—
He thinks of lovely Isabel,
When at her foeman's feet she fell,
Nor less when, placed in princely selle,
She glanced on him with favouring eyes,
At Woodstocke when he won the prize.
Nor, fair in joy, in sorrow fair,
In pride of place as 'mid despair,
Must she alone engross his care.

His thoughts to his betrothed bride,
To Edith turn—O how decide,
When here his love and heart are given,
And there his faith stands plight to Heaven!
No drowsy ward 'tis his to keep,
For seldom lovers long for sleep.
Till sung his midnight hymn the owl,
Answer'd the dog-fox with his howl,
Then waked the King—at his request,
Lord Ronald stretch'd himself to rest.

XXVII.

What spell was good King Robert's, say,
To drive the weary night away?
His was the patriot's burning thought,
Of Freedom's battle bravely fought,
Of castles storm'd, of cities freed,
Of deep design and daring deed,
Of England's roses reft and torn,
And Scotland's cross in triumph worn,
Of rout and rally, war and truce,—
As heroes think, so thought the Bruce.
No marvel, 'mid such musings high,
Sleep shunn'd the Monarch's thoughtful eye.
Now over Coolin's eastern head
The greyish light begins to spread,
The otter to his cavern drew,
And clamour'd shrill the wakening mew;
Then watch'd the Page—to needful rest
The King resign'd his anxious breast.

XXVIII.

To Allan's eyes was harder task,
The weary watch their safeties ask.
He trimm'd the fire, and gave to shine
With bickering light the splinter'd pine;
Then gazed a while, where silent laid
Their hosts were shrouded by the plaid.
But little fear waked in his mind,
For he was bred of martial kind,
And, if to manhood he arrive,
May match the boldest knight alive.
Then thought he of his mother's tower,
His little sister's greenwood bower,
How there the Easter-gambols pass,
And of Dan Joseph's lengthen'd mass.
But still before his weary eye
In rays prolong'd the blazes die—
Again he roused him—on the lake

Look'd forth, where now the twilight-flake,
 Of pale cold dawn began to wake.
 On Coolin's cliffs the mist lay furl'd.
 The morning breeze the lake had curl'd,
 The short dark waves, heaved to the land,
 With ceaseless splash kiss'd cliff or sand;—
 It was a slumbrous sound—he turn'd
 To tales at which his youth had burn'd,
 Of pilgrim's path by demon cross'd,
 Of sprightly elf or yelling ghost,
 Of the wild witch's baneful cot,
 And mermaid's alabaster grot,*
 Who bathes her limbs in sunless well
 Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.
 Thither in fancy rapt he flies,
 And on his sight the vaults arise;
 That hut's dark walls he sees no more,
 His foot is on the marble floor,
 And o'er his head the dazzling spars
 Gleam like a firmament of stars!
 —Hark! hears he not the sea-nymph speak
 Her anger in that thrilling shriek!
 No! all too late, with Allan's dream
 Mingled the captive's warning scream.
 As from the ground he strives to start,
 A ruffian's dagger finds his heart!
 Upwards he casts his dizzy eyes, . . .
 Murmurs his master's name, . . . and dies!

XXIX.

Not so awoke the King! his hand
 Snatch'd from the flame a knotted brand,
 The nearest weapon of his wrath;
 With this he cross'd the murderer's path,
 And venged young Allan well!
 The spatter'd brain and bubbling blood
 Hiss'd on the half-extinguish'd wood,
 The miscreant gasp'd and fell!
 Nor rose in peace the Island Lord;
 One caitiff died upon his sword,
 And one beneath his grasp lies prone,
 In mortal grapple overthrown.
 But while Lord Ronald's dagger drank
 The life-blood from his panting flank,
 The Father-ruffian of the band
 Behind him rears a coward hand!
 —O for a moment's aid,

* Note 33.

Till Bruce, who deals no double blow,
 Dash to the earth another foe,
 Above his comrade laid!—
 And it is gain'd—the captive sprung
 On the raised arm, and closely clung,
 And, ere he shook him loose,
 The master'd felon press'd the ground,
 And gasp'd beneath a mortal wound,
 While o'er him stands the Bruce.

XXX.

“Miscreant! while lasts thy flitting spark,
 Give me to know the purpose dark,
 That arm'd thy hand with murderous knife
 Against offenceless stranger's life?”—
 —“No stranger thou!” with accent fell,
 Murmur'd the wretch; “I know thee well;
 And know thee for the foeman sworn
 Of my high Chief, the mighty Lorn.”—
 “Speak yet again, and speak the truth
 For thy soul's sake!—from whence this youth?
 His country, birth, and name declare,
 And thus one evil deed repair.”—
 —“Vex me no more! . . . my blood runs cold . . .
 No more I know than I have told.
 We found him in a bark we sought
 With different purpose . . . and I thought” . . .
 Fate cut him short; in blood and broil;
 As he had lived, died Cormac Doil.

XXXI.

Then resting on his bloody blade,
 The valiant Bruce to Ronald said,—
 “Now shame upon us both!—that boy
 Lifts his mute face to heaven,
 And clasps his hands, to testify
 His gratitude to God on high,
 For strange deliverance given.
 His speechless gesture thanks hath paid,
 Which our free tongues have left unsaid!”
 He raised the youth with kindly word,
 But mark'd him shudder at the sword:
 He cleansed it from its hue of death,
 And plunged the weapon in its sheath.
 “Alas, poor child! unfitting part
 Fate doom'd, when with so soft a heart,
 And form so slight as thine,
 She made thee first a pirate's slave,
 Then, in his stead, a patron gave
 Of wayward lot like mine;

A landless prince, whose wandering life
Is but one scene of blood and strife—
Yet scant of friends the Bruce shall be,
But he'll find resting-place for thee. —
Come, noble Ronald! o'er the dead
Enough thy generous grief is paid,
And well has Allan's fate been wroke;
Come, wend we hence—the day has broke,
Seek we our bark—I trust the tale
Was false, that she had hoisted sail.”

XXXII.

Yet, ere they left that charnel-cell,
The Island Lord bade sad farewell
To Allan:—“ Who shall tell this tale,”
He said, “ in halls of Donagaile?
Oh, who his widow'd mother tell,
That, ere his bloom, her fairest fell!—
Rest thee, poor youth! and trust my care
For mass and knell and funeral prayer;
While o'er those caitiffs, where they lie,
The wolf shall snarl, the raven cry!”—
And now the eastern mountain's head
On the dark lake threw lustre red;
Bright gleams of gold and purple streak
Ravine and precipice and peak—
(So earthly power at distance shows;
Reveals his splendour, hides his woes.)
O'er sheets of granite, dark and broad.
Rent and unequal lay the road.
In sad discourse the warriors wind,
And the mute captive moves behind.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

STRANGER! if e'er thine ardent step hath traced
The northern realms of ancient Caledon,
Where the proud Queen of Wilderness hath placed,
By lake and cataract, her lonely throne;
Sublime but sad delight thy soul hath known,
Gazing on pathless glen and mountain high,
Listing where from the cliffs the torrents thrown
Mingle their echoes with the eagle's cry,
And with the sounding lake, and with the moaning sky.

Yes! 'twas sublime, but sad.—The loneliness
Loaded thy heart, the desert tired thine eye;
And strange and awful fears began to press
Thy bosom with a stern solemnity.
Then hast thou wish'd some woodman's cottage nigh,
Something that show'd of life, though low and mean;
Glad sight, its curling wreath of smoke to spy.
Glad sound, its cock's blithe carol would have been,
Or children whooping wild beneath the willows green.

Such are the scenes, where savage grandeur wakes
An awful thrill that softens into sighs;
Such feelings rouse them by dim Rannoch's lakes,
In dark Glencoe such gloomy raptures rise:
Or farther, where, beneath the northern skies,
Chides wild Loch-Eribol his caverns hoar—
But, be the minstrel judge, they yield the prize
Of desert dignity to that dread shore,
That sees grim Coolin rise, and hears Coriskin roar.

II.

Through such wild scenes the champion pass'd,
When bold halloc and bugle-blast
Upon the breeze came loud and fast.
"There," said the Bruce, "rung Edward's horn!
What can have caused such brief return?
And see, brave Ronald, see him dart
O'er stock and stone like hunted hart,
Precipitate, as is the use,
In war or sport, of Edward Bruce.
—He marks us, and his eager cry
Will tell his news ere he be nigh."

III.

Loud Edward shouts, "What make ye here,
Warring upon the mountain-deer,
When Scotland wants her King?
A bark from Lennox cross'd our track,
With her in speed I hurried back,
These joyful news to bring—
The Stuart stirs in Teviotdale,
And Douglas wakes his native vale;
Thy storm-toss'd fleet hath won its way
With little loss to Brodick Bay,
And Lennox, with a gallant hand,
Waits but thy coming and command
To waft them o'er to Carrick strand.
There are blithe news!—but mark the close!
Edward, the deadliest of our foes,
As with his host he northward pass'd,
Hath on the borders breathed his last."

IV.

Still stood the Bruce—his steady cheek
Was little wont his joy to speak,
But then his colour rose:—
"Now Scotland! shortly shalt thou see,
With God's high will, thy children free,
And vengeance on thy foes!
Yet to no sense of selfish wrongs,
Bear witness with me, Heaven, belongs
My joy o'er Edward's bier;
I took my knighthood at his hand,
And lordship held of him, and land,
And well may vouch it here,
That, blot the story from his page,
Of Scotland ruin'd in his rage,
You read a monarch brave and sage,
And to his people dear."—
"Let London's burgher's mourn her Lord,
And Croydon monks his praise record,"
The eager Edward said;
"Eternal as his own, my hate
Surmounts the bounds of mortal fate,
And dies not with the dead!
Such hate was his on Solway's strand,*
When vengeance clench'd his palsied hand,
That pointed yet to Scotland's land,
As his last accents pray'd

* Note 34.

In youth and close upon his hair,
 In his Scottish head should spare,
 The sword of the bloody hair
 That Robert Bruce was laid!
 Such hair was his, when his last breath
 Renowned the peaceful house of death,
 And laid his bones to Scotland's coast
 In honour by his own useless host,
 As if his dead and stony eye
 Could still say, "her misery!"
 Such hair was his—dark, deadly, long;
 Mine—as enduring, deep and strong!"

V.

"Let women, Edward, war with words,
 With curses mawkish, but men with swords:
 Nor darts of living fires, to sate
 Deepest revenge and deadliest hate.
 Now, to the sea! Behold the beach,
 And see the galleys' pendants stretch
 Their fluttering length down favouring gale
 Aboard, aboard! and hoist the sail.
 Hold we our way for Arran first,
 Where meet in arms our friends dispersed;
 Lennox the loyal, De la Haye,
 And Boyd the bold in battle fray.
 I long the hardy hand to head,
 And see once more my standard spread.
 Does noble Ronald share our course,
 Or stay to raise his island force?"—
 "Come weal, come wee, by Bruce's side,"
 Replied the Chief, "will Ronald bide.
 And since two galleys yonder ride,
 Be mine, so please my liege, dismiss'd
 To wake to arms the clans of Uist,
 And all who hear the Minche's roar,
 On the Long Island's lonely shore.
 The nearer Isles, with slight delay,
 Ourselves may summon in our way;
 And soon on Arran's shore shall meet,
 With Torquil's aid, a gallant fleet,
 If aught avails their Chieftain's hest
 Among the islemen of the west."

VI.

Thus was their venturous council said.
 But, ere their sails the galleys spread,
 Coriskin dark and Coolin high
 Echoed the dirge's doleful cry,

Along that sable lake pass'd slow,—
Fit scene for such a sight of woe,—
The sorrowing islemen, as they bore
The murder'd Allan to the shore.
At every pause, with dismal shout,
Their coronach of grief rung out,
And ever, when they moved again,
The pipes resumed their clamorous strain,
And, with the pibroch's shrilling wail,
Mourned the young heir of Donagaile.
Round and around, from cliff and cave,
His answer stern old Coolin gave,
Till high upon his misty side
Languish'd the mournful notes, and died.
For never sounds, by mortal made,
Attain'd his high and haggard head,
That echoes but the tempest's moan,
Or the deep thunder's rending groan.

VII.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark,
She bounds before the gale,
The mountain breeze from Ben-na-darch
Is joyous in her sail!
With fluttering sound like laughter hoarse,
The cords and canvass strain,
The waves, divided by her force,
In rippling eddies chased her course,
As if they laugh'd again.
Not down the breeze more blithely flew,
Skimming the wave, the light sea-mew,
Than the gay galley bore
Her course upon that favouring wind,
And Coolin's crest has sunk behind,
And Slapin's cavern'd shore.
'Twas then that warlike signals wake
Dunscaith's dark towers and Eisord's lake,
And soon, from Cavilgarrigh's head,
Thick wreaths of eddying smoke were spread;
A summons these of war and wrath
To the brave clans of Sleat and Strath,
And, ready at the sight,
Each warrior to his weapon sprung,
And targe upon his shoulder flung,
Impatient for the fight.
Mac-Kinnon's chief, in warfare grey,
Had charge to muster their array,
And guide their barks to Brodick Bay,

VIII.

Signal of Roland's high command,
 A beacon gleam'd o'er sea and land,
 From Canna's tower, that, steep and grey,*
 Like falcon-nest o'erhangs the bay.
 Seek not the giddy crag to climb,
 To view the turret scathed by time;
 It is a task of doubt and fear
 To aught but goat or mountain-deer.
 But rest thee on the silver beach,
 And let the aged herdsman teach
 His tale of former day;
 His cur's wild clamour he shall chide,
 And for thy seat by ocean's side,
 His varied plaid display;
 Then tell, how with their Chieftain came,
 In ancient times, a foreign dame
 To yonder turret grey.
 Stern was her Lord's suspicious mind,
 Who in so rude a jail confined
 So soft and fair a thrall!
 And oft, when moon on ocean slept,
 That lovely lady sate and wept
 Upon the castle-wall,
 And turn'd her eye to southern climes,
 And thought perchance of happier times,
 And touch'd her lute by fits, and sung
 Wild ditties in her native tongue.
 And still, when on the cliff and bay
 Placid and pale the moonbeams play,
 And every breeze is mute,
 Upon the lone Hebridean's ear
 Steals a strange pleasure mix'd with fear,
 While from that cliff he seems to hear
 The murmur of a lute,
 And sounds, as of a captive lone,
 That mourns her woes in tongue unknown.—
 Strange is the tale—but all too long
 Already hath it staid the song—
 Yet who may pass them by,
 That crag and tower in ruins grey,
 Nor to the hapless tenant pay
 The tribute of a sigh!

IX.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark
 O'er the broad ocean driven,

* Note 35.

Her path by Ronin's mountains dark
 The steerman's hand hath given.
 And Ronin's mountains dark have sent*
 Their hunters to the shore,
 And each his ashen bow unbent,
 And gave his pastime o'er,
 And at the Island Lord's command,
 For hunting spear took warrior's brand.
 On Scur-Eigg next a warning light †
 Summon'd her warriors to the fight;
 A numerous race, ere stern MacLeod
 O'er their bleak shores in vengeance strode,
 When all in vain the ocean-cave
 Its refuge to its victims gave.
 The Chief, relentless in his wrath,
 With blazing heath blockades the path,
 In dense and stifling volumes roll'd,
 The vapour fill'd the cavern'd hold!
 The warrior-threat, the infant's plain,
 The mother's screams, were heard in vain;
 The vengeful Chief maintains his fires,
 Till in the vault a tribe expires!
 The bones which strew that cavern's gloom,
 Too well attest their dismal doom.

X.

Merrily, merrily goes the bark
 On a breeze from the northward free,
 So shoots through the morning sky the lark,
 Or the swan through the summer sea.
 The shores of Mull on the eastward lay,
 And Ulva dark, and Colonsay,
 And all the group of islets gay
 That guard famed Staffa round. ‡
 Then all unknown its columns rose
 Where dark and undisturb'd repose
 The cormorant had found,
 And the shy seal had quiet home,
 And welter'd in that wondrous dome,
 Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
 By skill of earthly architect,
 Nature herself, it seem'd, would raise
 A Minster to her Maker's praise!
 Not for a meaner use ascend
 Her columns, or her arches bend;
 Nor of a theme less solemn tells
 That mighty surge that ebbs and swells,

* Note 36.

† Note 37.

‡ Note 38.

And still, between each awful pause,
 From the high vault an answer draws,
 In varied tone prolong'd and high,
 That mocks the organ's melody.
 Nor doth its entrance front in vain
 To old Iona's holy fane,
 That Nature's voice might seem to say,
 "Well hast thou done, frail Child of clay!
 Thy humble powers that stately shrine
 Task'd high and hard—but witness mine!"

XI.

Merrily, merrily goes the bark—
 Before the gale she bounds;
 So darts the dolphin from the shark,
 Or the deer before the hounds.
 They left Loch-Tua on their lee,
 And they waken'd the men of the wild Tiree,
 And the Chief of the sandy Coll;
 They paused not at Columba's isle,
 Though peal'd the bells from the holy pile,
 With long and measured toll;
 No time for matin or for mass,
 And the sounds of the holy summons pass
 Away in the billows' roll.
 Lochbuie's fierce and warlike Lord
 Their signal saw, and grasp'd his sword,
 And verdant Islay call'd her host,
 And the clans of Jura's rugged coast
 Lord Ronald's call obey,
 And Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
 Still rings to Corrievrekan's roar,
 And lonely Colonsay;
 —Scenes sung by him who sings no more
 His bright and brief career is o'er,
 And mute his tuneful strains;
 Quench'd is his lamp of varied lore,
 That loved the light of song to pour;
 A distant and a deadly shore
 Has LEYDEN's cold remains!

XII.

Ever the breeze blows merrily,
 But the galley ploughs no more the sea.
 Lest, rounding wild Cantyre, they meet
 The southern foeman's watchful fleet,
 They held unwonted way;—

Up Tarbat's western lake they bore,
 Then dragg'd their bark the isthmus o'er,*
 As far as Kilmaconnel's shore,
 Upon the eastern bay.
 Is was a wondrous sight to see
 Topmas
 High r ea,
 As on c
 By cliff
 Deep in l,
 Did ma
 For am
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 O
 Old Al
 And ev il
 Before her silver Cross.

ea

nd,"

ow;

The ocean so serene;
 Each puny wave in diamonds roll'd
 O'er the calm deep, where hues of gold
 With azure strove and green.
 The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
 Glow'd with the tints of evening's hour,
 The beech was silver sheen,
 The wind breathed soft as lover's sigh,
 And, oft renew'd, seem'd oft to die,
 With breathless pause between.
 O who, with speech of war and woes,
 Would wish to break the soft repose
 Of such enchanting scene!

XIV.

Is it of war Lord Ronald speaks?
 The blush that dyes his manly cheeks,
 The timid look, and downcast eye,
 And faltering voice the theme deny.

* *See p.*

And good King Robert's brow express'd,
He ponder'd o'er some high request,
As doubtful to approve;
Yet in his eye and lip the while,
Dwelt the half-pitying glance and smile,
Which manhood's graver mood beguile,
When lovers talk of love.
Anxious his suit Lord Ronald pled;
—"And for my bride betrothed," he said,
"My Liege has heard the rumour spread
Of Edith from Artornish fled.
Too hard her fate—I claim no right
To blame her for her hasty flight;
Be joy and happiness her lot!—
But she hath fled the bridal-knot
And Lorn recall'd his promised plight,
In the assembled chieftains' sight.—
When, to fulfil our fathers' band,
I proffer'd all I could—my hand—
I was repulsed with scorn;
Mine honour I should ill assert,
And worse the feelings of my heart,
If I should play a suitor's part
Again to pleasure Lorn."—

XV.

"Young Lord," the Royal Bruce replied,
"That question must the Church decide;
Yet seems it hard, since rumours state
Edith takes Clifford for her mate,
The very tie, which she hath broke,
To thee should still be binding yoke.
But, for my sister Isabel—
The mood of woman who can tell?
I guess the Champion of the Rock,
Victorious in the tourney shock,
That knight unknown, to whom the prize
She dealt,—had favour in her eyes;
But since our brother Nigel's fate,
Our ruin'd house and hapless state,
From worldly joy and hope estranged,
Much is the hapless mourner changed.
Perchance," here smiled the noble King,
"This tale may other musings bring.
Soon shall we know—yon mountains hide
The little convent of Saint Bride;
There, sent by Edward, she must stay,
Till fate shall give more prosperous day;
And thither will I bear thy suit,
Nor will thine advocate be mute."

XVI.

As thus they talk'd in earnest mood,
That speechless boy beside them stood.
He stoop'd his head against the mast,
And bitter sobs came thick and fast,
A grief that would not be repress'd,
But seem'd to burst his youthful breast.
His hands, against his forehead held,
As if by force his tears repell'd,
But through his fingers, long and slight,
Fast trill'd the drops of crystal bright.
Edward, who walk'd the deck apart,
First spied this conflict of the heart.
Thoughtless as brave, with bluntness kind
He sought to cheer the sorrower's mind;
By force the slender hand he drew
From those poor eyes that stream'd with dew.
As in his hold the stripling strove,—
('Twas a rough grasp, though meant in love,)
Away his tears the warrior swept,
And bade shame on him that he wept.
"I would to heaven, thy helpless tongue
Could tell me who hath wrought thee wrong!
For, were he of our crew the best,
The insult went not unredress'd.
Come, cheer thee; thou art now of age
To be a warrior's gallant page;
Thou shalt be mine!—a palfrey fair
O'er hill and holt my boy shall bear
To hold my bow in hunting grove,
Or speed on errand to my love;
For well I wot thou wilt not tell
The temple where my wishes dwell."

XVII.

Bruce interposed—"Gay Edward, no,
This is no youth to hold thy bow,
To fill thy goblet, or to bear
Thy message light to lighter fair.
Thou art a patron all too wild
And thoughtless, for this orphan child.
See'st thou not how apart he steals,
Keeps lonely couch, and lonely meals?
Fitter by far in yon calm cell
To tend our sister Isabel;
With father Augustine to share
The peaceful change of convent prayer,
Than wander wild adventures through,
With such a reckless guide as you."—

"Thanks, brother!" Edward answer'd gay,
 "For the high laud thy words convey!
 But we may learn some future day,
 If thou or I can this poor boy
 Protect the best, or best employ.
 Meanwhile, our vessel nears the strand;
 Launch we the boat, and seek the land."

XVIII.

To land King Robert lightly sprung,
 And thrice aloud his bugle rung
 With note prolong'd and varied strain,
 Till bold Ben-Ghoil replied again.
 Good Douglas, then, and De la Haye,
 Had in a glen a hart at bay,
 And Lennox cheer'd the laggard hounds,
 When waked that horn the greenwood bounds.
 "It is the foe!" cried Boyd, who came
 In breathless haste with eye of flame,—
 "It is the foe!—Each valiant lord
 Fling by his bow, and grasp his sword!"—
 "Not so," replied the good Lord James,
 "That blast no English bugle claims.
 Oft have I heard it fire the fight,
 Cheer the pursuit, or stop the flight.
 Dead were my heart, and deaf mine ear,
 If Bruce should call, nor Douglas hear!
 Each to Loch Ranza's margin spring;
 That blast was winded by the King!" *

XIX.

Fast to their mates the tidings spread
 And fast to shore the warriors sped.
 Bursting from glen and greenwood tree,
 High waked their loyal jubilee!
 Around the royal Bruce they crowd,
 And clasp'd his hands, and wept aloud.
 Veterans of early fields were there,
 Whose helmets press'd their hoary hair,
 Whose swords and axes bore a stain
 From life-blood of the red-hair'd Dane;
 And boys, whose hands scarce brook'd to wield
 The heavy sword or bossy shield.
 Men too were there, that bore the scars
 Impress'd in Albyn's woeful wars,
 At Falkirk's fierce and fatal fight,
 Tyndrum's dread rout, and Methven's flight;

* Note 40.

The might of Douglas there was seen,
 There Lennox with his graceful mien;
 Kirkpatrick, Closeburn's dreaded Knight;
 The Lindsay, fiery, fierce, and light;
 The Heir of murder'd De la Haye,
 And Boyd the grave, and Seton gay.
 Around their King regain'd they press'd,
 Wept, shouted, clasp'd him to their breast,
 And young and old, and serf and lord,
 And he who ne'er unsheathed a sword,
 And he in many a peril tried,
 Alike resolved the brunt to bide,
 And live or die by Bruce's side!

XX.

Oh, war! thou hast thy fierce delight,
 Thy gleams of joy, intensely bright!
 Such gleams, as from thy polish'd shield
 Fly dazzling o'er the battle-field!
 Such transports wake, severe and high,
 Amid the pealing conquest cry;
 Scarce less, when, after battle lost,
 Muster the remnants of a host,
 And as each comrade's name they tell,
 Who in the well-fought conflict fell,
 Knitting stern brow o'er flashing eye,
 Vow to avenge them or to die!—
 Warriors!—and where are warriors found,
 If not on martial Britain's ground?
 And who, when waked with note of fire,
 Love more than they the British lyre?—
 Know ye not,—hearts to honour dear!
 That joy, deep-thrilling, stern, severe,
 At which the heart-strings vibrate high,
 And wake the fountains of the eye?
 And blame ye, then, the Bruce, if trace
 Of tear is on his manly face,
 When, scanty relics of the train
 That hail'd at Scone his early reign,
 This patriot band around him hung,
 And to his knees and bosom clung?—
 Blame ye the Bruce?—His brother blamed,
 But shared the weakness, while ashamed,
 With haughty laugh his head he turn'd,
 And dash'd away the tear he scorn'd.

XXI.

'Tis morning, and the Convent bell
 Long time had ceased its matin knell,
 Within thy walls, Saint Bride!

An aged Sister sought the cell
Assign'd to Lady Isabel,
And hurriedly she cried,
"Haste, gentle Lady, haste!—there waits
A noble stranger at the gates;
Saint Bride's poor vot'ress ne'er has seen
A Knight of such a princely mien;
His errand, as he bade me tell,
Is with the Lady Isabel."
The princess rose,—for on her knee
Low bent she told her rosary,—
"Let him by thee his purpose teach;
I may not give a stranger speech."—
"Saint Bride forbend, thou royal Maid!"
The portress cross'd herself, and said;—
"Not to be Prioress might I
Debate his will, his suit deny."
"Has earthly show, then, simple fool,
Power o'er a sister of thy rule?
And art thou, like the worldly train,
Subdued by splendours light and vain?"

XXII.

"No, Lady! in old eyes like mine,
Gauds have no glitter, gems no shine;
Nor grace his rank attendants vain,
One youthful page is all his train.
It is the form, the eye, the word,
The bearing of that stranger Lord;
His stature, manly, bold, and tall,
Built like a castle's battled wall,
Yet moulded in such just degrees,
His giant-strength seems lightsome ease.
Close as the tendrils of the vine
His locks upon his forehead twine,
Jet-black, save where some touch of grey
Has ta'en the youthful hue away.
Weather and war their rougher trace
Have left on that majestic face;—
But 'tis his dignity of eye!
There, if a suppliant, would I fly,
Secure, 'mid danger, wrongs, and grief,
Of sympathy, redress, relief—
That glance, if guilty, would I dread
More than the doom that spoke me dead!"
"Enough, enough," the Princess cried,
"'Tis Scotland's hope, her joy, her pride!
To meaner front was ne'er assign'd
Such mastery o'er the common mind—

Bestow'd thy high designs to aid,
How long, O Heaven! how long delay'd!—
Haste, Mona, haste, to introduce
My darling brother, royal Bruce!”

XXIII.

They met like friends who part in pain,
And meet in double hope again.
But when subdued that fitful swell,
The Bruce survey'd the humble cell;—
“And this is thine, poor Isabel!—
That pallet-couch, and naked wall,
For room of state, and bed of pall;
For costly robes and jewels rare,
A string of beads and zone of hair;
And for the trumpet's sprightly call
To sport or banquet, grove or hall
The bell's grim voice divides thy care,
'Twixt hours of penitence and prayer!—
O ill for thee, my royal claim
From the first David's sainted name!
O woe for thee, that while he sought
His right, thy brother feebly fought!”—

XXIV.

“Now lay these vain regrets aside,
And be the unshaken Bruce!” she cried.
“For more I glory to have shared
The woes thy venturous spirit dared,
When raising first thy valiant band
In rescue of thy native land,
Than had fair Fortune set me down
The partner of an empire's crown.
And grieve not that on Pleasure's stream
No more I drive in giddy dream,
For Heaven the erring pilot knew,
And from the gulf the vessel drew,
Tried me with judgments stern and great,
My house's ruin, thy defeat,
Poor Nigel's death, till, tamed, I own,
My hopes are fix'd on Heaven alone;
Nor e'er shall earthly prospects win
My heart to this vain world of sin.”

XXV.

“Nay, Isabel, for such stern choice,
First wilt thou wait thy brother's voice;
Then ponder if in convent scene
No softer thoughts might intervene—

Say they were of that unknown Knight,
 Victor in Woodstock's tourney-fight—
 Nay, if his name such blush you owe,
 Victorious o'er a fairer foe!"

Truly his penetrating eye
 Hath caught that blush's passing dye,—
 Like the last beam of evening thrown
 On a white cloud,—just seen and gone;
 Soon with calm cheek and steady eye;
 The Princess made composed reply:—
 "I guess my brother's meaning well;
 For not so silent is the cell,
 But we have heard the islemen all
 Arm in thy cause at Ronald's call,
 And mine eye proves that Knight unknown
 And the brave Island Lord are one—
 Had then his suit been earlier made,
 In his own name, with thee to aid,
 (But that his plighted faith forbade;)
 I know not . . . But thy page so near!—
 This is no tale for menial's ear."

XXVI.

Still stood that page, as far apart
 As the small cell would space afford;
 With dizzy eye and bursting heart,
 He leant his weight on Bruce's sword,
 The monarch's mantle too he bore,
 And drew the fold his visage o'er.
 "Fear not for him—in murderous strife,"
 Said Bruce, "his warning saved my life;
 Full seldom parts he from my side,
 And in his silence I confide,
 Since he can tell no tale again.
 He is a boy of gentle strain,
 And I have purposed he shall dwell
 In Augustine the chaplain's cell,
 And wait on thee, my Isabel.—
 Mind not his tears; I've seen them flow,
 As in the thaw dissolves the snow.
 'Tis a kind youth, but fanciful,
 Unfit against the tide to pull,
 And those that with the Bruce would sail,
 Must learn to strive with stream and gale.
 But forward, gentle Isabel—
 My answer for Lord Ronald tell."—

XXVII.

"This answer be to Ronald given—
 The heart he asks is fix'd on heaven.

My love was like a summer flower,
 That wither'd in the wintry hour,
 Born but of vanity and pride,
 And with these sunny visions died.
 If further press his suit—then say,
 He should his plighted troth obey,
 Troth plighted both with ring and word,
 And sworn on cruxifix and sword.—
 Oh, shame thee, Robert! I have seen
 Thou hast a woman's guardian been!
 Even in extremity's dread hour
 When press'd on thee the Southern power,
 And safety, to all human sight;
 Was only bound in rapid flight,
 Thou heard'st a wretched female plain
 In agony of travail-pain,
 And thou didst bid thy little band
 Upon the instant turn and stand,
 And dare the worst the foe might do
 Rather than, like a knight untrue,
 Leave to pursuers merciless
 A woman in her last distress.*
 And wilt thou now deny thine aid
 To an oppress'd and injured maid,
 Even plead for Ronald's perfidy,
 And press his fickle faith on me?—
 So witness Heaven, as true I vow,
 Had I those earthly feelings now,
 Which could my former bosom move
 Ere taught to set its hopes above,
 I'd spurn each proffer he could bring,
 Till at my feet he laid the ring,
 The ring and spousal contract both,
 And fair acquittal of his oath,
 By her who brooks his perjured scorn,
 The ill-requited Maid of Lorn!"

XXVIII.

With sudden impulse forward sprung
 The page, and on her neck he hung;
 Then, recollected instantly,
 His head he stoop'd, and bent his knee,
 Kiss'd twice the hand of Isabel,
 Arose, and sudden left the cell.—
 The Princess, loosen'd from his hold,
 Blush'd angry at his bearing bold;
 But good King Robert cried,

* Note 41.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

On fair Loch-Ranza stream'd the early day,
 Thin wreaths of cottage-smoke are upward curl'd
 From the lone hamlet, which her inland bay
 And circling mountains sever from the world.
 And there the fisherman his sail unfurl'd,
 The goat-herd drove his kids to steep Ben-Ghoil,
 Before the hut the dame her spindle twirl'd,
 Courting the sunbeam as she plied her toil,—
 For, wake where'er he may, Man wakes to care and coil.

But other duties call'd each convent maid,
 Roused by the summons of the moss-grown bell;
 Sung were the matins, and the mass was said,
 And every sister sought her separate cell,
 Such was the rule, her rosary to tell.
 And Isabel has knelt in lonely prayer;
 The sunbeam, through the narrow lattice, fell
 Upon the snowy neck and long dark hair,
 As stoop'd her gentle head in meek devotion there.

II.

She raised her eyes, that duty done,
 When glanced upon the pavement-stone,
 Gemm'd and enchased, a golden ring,
 Bound to a scroll with silken string,
 With few brief words inscribed to tell,
 "This for the Lady Isabel."
 Within, the writing further bore,—
 "'Twas with this ring his plight he swore,
 With this his promise I restore;
 To her who can the heart command,
 Well may I yield the plighted hand,
 And O! for better fortune born,
 Grudge not a passing sigh to mourn
 Her who was Edith once of Lorn!"
 One single flash of glad surprise
 Just glanced from Isabel's dark eyes,
 But vanish'd in the blush of shame,
 That, as its penance, instant came.
 "O thought unworthy of my race!
 Selfish, ungenerous, mean, and base,
 A moment's throb of joy to own,
 That rose upon her hopes o'erthrown!—

Thou pledge of vows too well believed,
 Of man ingrate and maid deceived.
 Think not thy lustre here shall gain
 Another heart to hope in vain!
 For thou shalt rest, thou tempting gaud,
 Where worldly thoughts are overawed,
 And worldly splendours sink debased."
 Then by the cross the ring she placed.

III.

Next rose the thought,—its owner far,
 How came it here through bolt and bar?—
 But the dim lattice is ajar.—
 She looks abroad,—the morning dew
 A light short step had brush'd anew,
 And there were footprints seen
 On the carved buttress rising still,
 Till on the mossy window-sill
 Their track effaced the green.
 The ivy twigs were torn and fray'd,
 As if some climber's steps to aid.—
 But who the hardy messenger,
 Whose venturous path these signs infer?
 Strange doubts are mine!—Mona, draw nigh;
 —Nought 'scapes old Mona's curious eye—
 What strangers, gentle mother, say,
 Have sought these holy walls to-day?"
 "None, Lady, none of note or name;
 Only your brother's foot-page came,
 At peep of dawn—I pray'd him pass
 To chapel where they said the mass;
 But like an arrow he shot by,
 And tears seem'd bursting from his eye."

IV.

The truth at once on Isabel,
 As darted by a sunbeam fell;
 "'Tis Edith's self!—her speechless woe,
 Her form, her looks, the secret show!
 —Instant, good Mona, to the bay,
 And to my royal brother say,
 I do conjure him seek my cell,
 With that mute page he loves so well."—
 "What! know'st thou not his warlike host
 At break of day has left our coast?
 My old eyes saw them from the tower,
 At eve they couch'd in greenwood bower,
 At dawn a bugle signal, made
 By their bold Lord, their ranks array'd;

Up sprang the spears through bush and tree,
No time for benedicite!
Like deer, that, rousing from their lair,
Just shake the dewdrops from their hair,
And toss their armed crests aloft,
Such matins theirs!"—"Good mother, soft—
Where does my brother bend his way?"—
As I have heard, for Brodick Bay,
Across the isle—of barks a score
Lie there, 'tis said, to waft them o'er,
On sudden news, to Carrick-shore."—
"If such their purpose, deep the need,"
Said anxious Isabel, "of speed!
Call Father Augustine, good dame."—
The nun obey'd, the Father came.

V.

"Kind Father, hie without delay,
Across the hills to Brodick Bay.
This message to the Bruce be given;
I pray him, by his hopes of Heaven,
That, till he speak with me, he stay!
Or, if his haste brook no delay,
That he deliver, on my suit,
Into thy charge that stripling mute.
Thus prays his sister Isabel,
For causes more than she may tell—
Away, good Father! and take heed,
That life and death are on thy speed."
His cowl the good old priest did on,
Took his piked staff and sandall'd shoon,
And, like a palmer bent by eld,
O'er moss and moor his journey held.

VI.

Heavy and dull the foot of age,
And rugged was the pilgrimage;
But none were there beside, whose care
Might such important message bear.
Through birchen copse he wander'd slow,
Stunted and sapless, thin and low;
By many a mountain stream he pass'd,
From the tall cliffs in tumult cast,
Dashing to foam their waters dun,
And sparkling in the summer sun.
Round his grey head the wild curlew
In many a fearless circle flew.
O'er chasms he pass'd, where fractures wide
Craved wary eye and ample stride;

He cross'd his brow beside the stone,
 Where Druids erst heard victims groan,
 And at the cairns upon the wild,
 O'er many a heathen hero piled,
 He breathed a timid prayer for those
 Who died ere Shiloh's sun arose.
 Beside Macfarlane's Cross he staid,
 There told his hours within the shade,
 And at the stream his thirst allay'd.
 Thence onward journeying slowly still,
 As evening closed he reach'd the hill,
 Where, rising through the woodland green,
 Old Brodick's gothic towers were seen,*
 From Hastings, late their English lord,
 Douglas had won them by the sword.
 The sun had sunk behind the isle,
 Now tinged them with a parting smile.

VII.

But though the beams of light decay,
 'Twas bustle all in Brodick Bay.
 The Bruce's followers crowd the shore,
 And boats and barges some unmoor,
 Some raise the sail, some seize the oar;
 Their eyes oft turn'd where glimmer'd far
 What might have seem'd an early star
 On heaven's blue arch, save that its light
 Was all too flickering, fierce, and bright.
 Far distant in the south, the ray
 Shone pale amid retiring day,
 But as, on Carrick shore,
 Dim seen in outline faintly blue,
 The shades of evening closer drew,
 It kindled more and more.
 The monk's slow steps now press the sands,
 And now amid a scene he stands,
 Full strange to churchman's eye;
 Warriors, who, arming for the fight,
 Rivet and clasp their harness light,
 And twinkling spears, and axes bright,
 And helmets, flashing high.
 Oft, too, with unaccustom'd ears,
 A language much unmeet he hears,†
 While, hastening all on board,
 As stormy as the swelling surge
 That mix'd its roar, the leaders urge
 Their followers to the ocean verge,
 With many a haughty word.

* Note 42.

† Note 43.

VIII.

Through that wild throng the Father pass'd,
 And reach'd the Royal Bruce at last,
 He leant against a stranded boat,
 That the approaching tide must float,
 And counted every rippling wave,
 As higher yet her sides they lave,
 And oft the distant fire he eyed,
 And closer yet his hauberk tied,
 And loosen'd in his sheath his brand.
 Edward and Lennox were at hand,
 Douglas and Ronald had the care
 The soldiers to the barks to share.—
 The Monk approach'd, and homage paid;
 "And art thou come," King Robert said,
 "So far to bless us ere we part?"
 —"My Liege, and with a loyal heart!—
 But other charge I have to tell,"—
 And spoke the hest of Isabel.
 —"Now by Saint Giles," the Monarch cried,
 "This moves me much!—this morning tide,
 I sent the stripling to Saint Bride,
 With my commandment there to hide."
 —"Thither he came, the portress show'd,
 But there, my Liege, made brief abode."—

IX.

"'Twas I," said Edward, "found employ
 Of nobler import for the boy.
 Deep pondering in my anxious mind,
 A fitting messenger to find,
 To bear thy written mandate o'er
 To Cuthbert on the Carrick shore,
 I chanced, at early dawn, to pass
 The chapel gate to snatch a mass.
 I found the stripling on a tomb
 Low-seated, weeping for the doom
 That gave his youth to convent gloom,
 I told my purpose, and his eyes
 Flash'd joyful at the glad surprise.
 He bounded to the skiff, the sail
 Was spread before a prosperous gale,
 And well my charge he hath obeyed;
 For, see! the ruddy signal made,*
 That Clifford, with his merry-men all,
 Guards carelessly our father's hall."—

* Note 44.

X.

"O wild of thought, and hard of heart!"
 Answer'd the Monarch, "on a part
 Of such deep danger to employ
 A mute, an orphan, and a boy!
 Unfit for flight, unfit for strife,
 Without a tongue to plead for life!
 Now, were my right restored by Heaven,
 Edward, my crown I would have given,
 Ere, thrust on such adventure wild,
 I perill'd thus the helpless child."—
 —Offended half, and half submiss,—
 "Brother and Liege, of blame like this,"
 Edward replied, "I little dream'd.
 A stranger messenger, I deem'd,
 Might safest seek the beadsman's cell,
 Where all thy squires are known so well.
 Noteless his presence, sharp his sense,
 His imperfection his defence.
 If seen, none can his errand guess;
 If ta'en, his words no tale express—
 Methinks, too, yonder beacon's shine
 Might expiate greater fault than mine."—
 "Rash," said King Robert, "was the deed—
 But it is done. Embark with speed!—
 Good Father, say to Isabel
 How this unhappy chance befell;
 If well we thrive on yonder shore,
 Soon shall my care her page restore.
 Our greeting to our sister bear,
 And think of us in mass and prayer."

XI.

"Aye!"—said the Priest, "while this poor hand
 Can chalice raise or cross command,
 While my old voice has accents' use,
 Can Augustine forget the Bruce!"
 Then to his side Lord Ronald press'd,
 And whisper'd, "Bear thou this request,
 That when by Bruce's side I fight,
 For Scotland's crown and Freedom's right,
 The princess grace her knight to bear
 Some token of her favouring care;
 It shall be shown where England's best
 May shrink to see it on my crest.
 And for the boy—since weightier care
 For Royal Bruce the times prepare,
 The helpless youth is Ronald's charge,
 His couch my plaid, his fence my targe."

He ceased; for many an eager hand
Had urged the barges from the strand.
Their number was a score and ten,
They bore thrice threescore chosen men,
With such small force did Bruce at last
The die for death or empire cast!

XII.

Now on the darkening main afloat,
Ready and mann'd, rocks every boat;
Beneath their oars the ocean's might
Was dash'd to sparks of glimmering light.
Faint and more faint, as off they bore,
Their armour glanced against the shore,
And, mingled with the dashing tide,
Their murmuring voices distant died.—
“God speed them!” said the Priest, as dark
On distant billows glides each bark;
“O Heaven! when swords for freedom shine,
And monarch's right, the cause is thine!
Edge doubly every patriot blow!
Beat down the banners of the foe!
And be it to the nations known,
That Victory is from God alone!”
As up the hill his path he drew,
He turn'd his blessings to renew,
Oft turn'd, till on the darken'd coast
All traces of their course were lost;
Then slowly bent to Brodick tower,
To shelter for the evening hour.

XIII.

In night the fairy prospects sink,
Where Cumray's isles with verdant link
Close the fair entrance of the Clyde;
The woods of Bute, no more descried,
Are gone—and on the placid sea
The rowers ply their task with glee,
While hands that knightly lances bore
Impatient aid the labouring oar.
The half-faced moon shone dim and pale,
And glanc'd against the whiten'd sail;
But on that ruddy beacon-light
Each steersman kept the helm aright,
And oft, for such the King's command,
That all at once might reach the strand,
From boat to boat loud shout and hail
Warn'd them to crowd or slacken sail.
South and by west the armada bore,
And near at length the Carrick shore.

As less and less the distance grows,
High and more high the beacon rose;
The light that seem'd a twinkling star,
Now blazed portentous, fierce, and far.
Dark-red the heaven above it glow'd,
Dark-red the sea beneath it flow'd,
Red rose the rocks on ocean's brim,
In blood-red light her islets swim;
Wild scream the dazzled sea-fowl gave,
Dropp'd from their crags on plashing wave.
The deer to distant cover drew,
The black-cock deem'd it day, and crew.
Like some tall castle given to flame,
O'er half the land the lustre came.
"Now, good my Liege, and brother sage,
What think you of mine elfin page?"—
"Row on!" the noble King replied,
"We'll learn the truth whate'er betide;
Yet sure the beadsman and the child
Could ne'er have waked that beacon wild."

XIV.

With that the boats approach'd the land,
But Edward's grounded on the sand;
The eager Knight leap'd in the sea
Waist-deep, and first on shore was he,
Though every barge's hardy band
Contended which should gain the land,
When that strange light, which, seen afar,
Seem'd steady as the polar star,
Now, like a prophet's fiery chair,
Seem'd travelling the realms of air.
Wide o'er the sky the splendour glows,
As that portentous meteor rose;
Helm, axe, and falchion glitter'd bright,
And in the red and dusky light
His comrade's face each warrior saw,
Nor marvell'd it was pale with awe.
Then high in air the beams were lost,
And darkness sunk upon the coast.—
Ronald to Heaven a prayer address'd,
And Douglas cross'd his dauntless breast;
"Saint James protect us!" Lennox cried,
But reckless Edward spoke aside,
"Deem'st thou, Kirkpatrick, in that flame
Red Comyn's angry spirit came,
Or would thy dauntless heart endure
Once more to make assurance sure?"

"Hush!" said the Bruce; "we soon shall know,
If this be sorcerer's empty show,
Or stratagem of southern foe.
The moon shines out—upon the sand
Let every leader rank his band."

XV.

Faintly the moon's pale beams supply
That ruddy light's unnatural dye;
The dubious cold reflection lay
On the wet sands and quiet bay.
Beneath the rocks King Robert drew
His scatter'd files to order due,
Till shield compact and serried spear
In the cool light shone blue and clear.
Then down a path that sought the tide,
That speechless page was seen to glide;
He knelt him lowly on the sand,
And gave a scroll to Robert's hand.
"A torch," the Monarch cried, "What, ho!
Now shall we Cuthbert's tidings know."
But evil news the letters bear,
The Clifford's force was strong and ware,
Augmented, too, that very morn;
By mountaineers who came with Lorn:
Long harrow'd by oppressor's hand,
Courage and faith had fled the land,
And over Carrick, dark and deep,
Had sunk dejection's iron sleep.—
Cuthbert had seen that beacon flame;
Unwitting from what source it came.
Doubtful of perilous event,
Edward's mute messenger he sent,
If Bruce deceived should venture o'er,
To warn him from the fatal shore.

XVI.

As round the torch the leaders crowd,
Bruce read these chilling news aloud.
"What council, nobles, have we now?—
To ambush us in greenwood bough,
And take the chance which fate may send
To bring our enterprise to end?
Or shall we turn us to the main
As exiles, and embark again?"—
Answer'd fierce Edward, "Hap what may;
In Carrick, Carrick's Lord must stay.
I would not minstrels told the tale,
Wildfire or meteor made us quail."

Answer'd the Douglas—"If my Liegè
 May win yon walls by storm or siege,
 Then were each brave and patriot heart
 Kindled of new for loyal part."
 Answer'd Lord Ronald—"Not for shame
 Would I that aged Torquil came,
 And found, for all our empty boast,
 Without a blow we fled the coast:
 I will not credit that this land,
 So famed for warlike heart and hand,
 The nurse of Wallace and of Bruce,
 Will long with tyrants hold a truce,"
 "Prove we our fate—the brunt we'll bide!"
 So Boyd and Haye and Lennox cried;
 So said, so vow'd, the leaders all;
 So Bruce resolved: "And in my hall
 Since the Bold Southern make their home,
 The hour of payment soon shall come,
 When with a rough and rugged host
 Clifford may reckon to his cost.
 Meantime, through well-known bosk and dell,
 I'll lead where we may shelter well."

XVII.

Now ask you whence that wondrous light,
 Whose fairy glow beguil'd their sight?—
 It ne'er was known—yet grey hair'd eld
 A superstitious credence held,
 That never did a mortal hand
 Wake its broad glare on Carrick strand;
 Nay, and that on the self-same night
 When Bruce cross'd o'er, still gleams the light.
 Yearly it gleams o'er mount and moor,
 And glittering wave and crimson'd shore—
 But whether beam celestial, lent
 By Heaven to aid the King's descent.
 Or fire hell-kindled from beneath,
 To lure him to defeat and death,
 Or were it but some meteor strange,
 Of such as oft through midnight range,
 Startling the traveller late and lone,
 I know not—and it ne'er was known.

XVIII.

Now up the rocky pass they drew,
 And Ronald, to his promise true,
 Still made his arm the stripling's stay,
 To aid him on the rugged way.
 "Now cheer thee, simple Amadine!
 Why throbs that silly heart of thine?"—

—That name the pirates to their slave
(In Gaelic 'tis the Changeling) gave—
“Dost thou not rest thee on my arm?
Do not my plaid-folds hold thee warm?
Hath not the wild bull's treble hide
This targe for thee and me supplied?
Is not Clan-Colla's sword of steel?
And, trembler, canst thou terror feel?
Cheer thee, and still that throbbing heart;
From Ronald's guard thou shalt not part.”
—O! many a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant!
And many a word, at random spoken,
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken!
Half sooth'd, half grieved, half terrified,
Close drew the page to Ronald's side;
A wild delirious thrill of joy
Was in that hour of agony,
As up the steepy pass he strove,
Fear toil, and sorrow, lost in love!

XIX.

The barrier of that iron shore,
The rock's steep ledge, is now climb'd o'er;
And from the castle's distant wall,
From tower to tower the warders call:
The sound swings over land and sea,
And marks a watchful enemy.—
They gain'd the Chase, a wide domain
Left for the castle's silvan reign,
(Seek not the scene—the axe, the plough,
The boor's dull fence, have marr'd it now,)
But then, soft swept in velvet green
The plain with many a glade between,
Whose tangled alleys far invade
The depth of the brown forest shade.
Here the tall fern obscured the lawn,
Fair shelter for the sportive fawn;
There, tufted close with copsewood green,
Was many a swelling hillock seen;
And all around was verdure meet
For pressure of the fairies' feet.
The glossy holly loved the park,
The yew-tree lent its shadow dark,
And many an old oak, worn and bare,
With all its shiver'd boughs, was there.
Lovely between, the moonbeams fell
On lawn and hillock, glade and dell.

The gallant Monarch sigh'd to see
These glades so lov'd in childhood free,
Bethinking that, as outlaw now,
He ranged beneath the forest's bough.

XX.

Fast o'er the moonlight Chase they sped.
Well knew the band that measured tread,
When, in retreat or in advance,
The serried warriors move at once;
And evil were the luck, if dawn
Descried them on the open lawn.
Copses they traverse, brooks they cross,
Strain up the bank and o'er the moss.
From the exhausted page's brow
Cold drops of toil are streaming now;
With effort faint and lengthen'd pause,
His weary step the stripling draws.
"Nay, droop not yet!" the warrior said;
"Come, let me give thee ease and aid!
Strong are mine arms, and little care
A weight so slight as thine to bear.—
What! wilt thou not?—capricious boy!—
Then thine own limbs and strength employ.
Pass but this night, and pass thy care,
I'll place thee with a lady fair,
Where thou shalt tune thy lute to tell
How Ronald loves fair Isabel!"
Worn out, dishearten'd, and dismay'd,
Here Amadine let go the plaid;
His trembling limbs their aid refuse,
He sunk amid the midnight dews!

XXI.

What may be done?—the night is gone—
The Bruce's band moves swiftly on—
Eternal shame, if at the brunt
Lord Ronald grace not battle's front!—
"See yonder oak, within whose trunk
Decay a darken'd cell hath sunk;
Enter, and rest thee there a space,
Wrap in my plaid thy limbs, thy face.
I will not be, believe me, far;
But must not quit the ranks of war.
Well will I mark the bosky bourn,
And soon, to guard thee hence, return.—
Nay, weep not so, thou simple boy!
But sleep in peace, and wake in joy."

In silvan lodging close bestow'd,
He placed the page, and onward strode
With strength put forth, o'er moss and brook,
And soon the marching band o'ertook.

XXII.

Thus strangely left, long sobb'd and wept
The page, till, wearied out, he slept—
A rough voice waked his dream—"Nay, here,
Here by this thicket, pass'd the deer—
Beneath that oak old Ryno staid—
What have we here?—A Scottish plaid,
And in its folds a stripling laid?
Come forth! thy name and business tell!
What, silent?—then I guess thee well,
The spy that sought old Cuthbert's cell,
Wafted from Arran yester morn—
Come, comrades, we will straight return.
Our Lord may choose the rack should teach
To this young lurcher use of speech.
Thy bow-string, till I bind him fast."—
"Nay, but he weeps and stands aghast;
Unbound we'll lead him, fear it not;
'Tis a fair stripling, though a Scot."
The hunters to the castle sped,
And there the hapless captive led,

XXIII.

Stout Clifford in the castle-court
Prepared him for the morning sport;
And now with Lorn held deep discourse
Now gave command for hound and horse.
War-steeds and palfreys paw'd the ground,
And many a deer-dog howl'd around.
To Amadine, Lorn's well-known word
Replying to that Southern Lord,
Mix'd with this clanging din, might seem
The phantasm of a fever'd dream.
The tone upon his ringing ears
Came like the sounds which fancy hears,
When in rude waves or roaring winds
Some words of woe the muser finds;
Until more loudly and more near,
Their speech arrests the page's ear.

XXIV.

"And was she thus," said Clifford, "lost?
The priest shall rue it to his cost!
What says the monk?"—"The holy Sire
Owns that in masquer's quaint attire,

She sought his skiff, disguised, unknown
 To all except to him alone.
 But, says the priest, a bark from Lorn
 Laid them aboard that very morn,
 And pirates seized her for their prey.
 He proffer'd ransom gold to pay,
 And they agreed—but ere told o'er,
 The winds blow loud, the billows roar;
 They sever'd, and they met no more.
 He deems—such tempests vex'd the coast—
 Ship, crew, and fugitive were lost.
 So let it be, with the disgrace
 And scandal of her lofty race!
 Thrice better she had ne'er been born,
 Than brought her infamy on Lorn!"

XXV.

Lord Clifford now the captive spied;—
 "Whom, Herbert, hast thou there?" he cried.
 "A spy we seized within the Chase,
 A hollow oak his lurking place."—
 "What tidings can the youth afford?"
 "He plays the mute."—"Then noose a cord—
 Unless brave Lorn reverse the doom
 For his plaid's sake."—"Clan-Colla's loom,"
 Said Lorn, whose careless glances trace
 Rather the vesture than the face,
 "Clan-Colla's dames such tartans twine;
 Wearer nor plaid claims care of mine.
 Give him, if my advice you crave,
 His own scath'd oak; and let him wave
 In air, unless, by terror wrung,
 A frank confession find his tongue.—
 Nor shall he die without his rite;
 —Thou, Angus Roy, attend the sight,
 And give Clan-Colla's dirge thy breath,
 As they convey him to his death."—
 "O brother! cruel to the last!"
 Through the poor captive's bosom pass'd
 The thought, but to his purpose true,
 He said not, though he sigh'd, "Adieu!"

XXVI.

And will he keep his purpose still,
 In sight of that last closing ill,
 When one poor breath, one single word,
 May freedom, safety, life, afford?
 Can he resist the instinctive call,
 For life that bids us barter all?—

Love, strong as death, his heart hath steel'd,
His nerves hath strung—he will not yield!
Since that poor breath, that little word,
May yield Lord Ronald to the sword.—
Clan-Colla's dirge is pealing wide,
The griesly headsman's by his side;
Along the greenwood Chase they bend,
And now their march has ghastly end!
That old and shatter'd oak beneath,
They destine for the place of death.
—What thoughts are his, while all in vain
His eye for aid explores the plain?
What thoughts, the while, with a dizzy ear,
He hears the death-prayer mutter'd near?
And must he die such death accurst,
Or will that bosom-secret burst?
Cold on his brow breaks terrors dew,
His trembling lips are livid blue;
The agony of parting life
Has nought to match that moment's strife!

XXVII.

But other witnesses are nigh,
Who mock at fear, and death defy!
Soon as the dire lament was play'd,
It waked the lurking ambuscade.
The Island Lord look'd forth, and spied
The cause, and loud in fury cried,—
“By Heaven, they lead the page to die,
And mock me in his agony!
They shall abye it!”—On his arm
Bruce laid strong grasp, “They shall not harm
A ringlet of the stripling's hair;
But, till I give the word forbear.
—Douglas, lead fifty of our force
Up yonder hollow water-course,
And couch thee midway on the wold
Between the flyers and their hold:
A spear above the copse display'd,
Be signal of the ambush made.
—Edward, with forty spearmen, straight
Through yonder copse approach the gate,
And, when thou hear'st the battle-din,
Rush forward, and the passage win,
Secure the drawbridge—storm the port,
And man and guard the castle-court.—
The rest move slowly forth with me,
In shelter of the forest-tree,
Till Douglas at his post I see.”

XXVIII.

Like war-horse eager to rush on,
Compell'd to wait the signal blown,
Hid, and scarce hid, by greenwood bough,
Trembling with rage, stands Ronald now,
And in his grasp his sword gleams blue,
Soon to be dyed with deadlier hue.—
Meanwhile the Bruce, with steady eye,
Sees the dark death-train moving by,
And heedful measures oft the space
The Douglas and his band must trace,
Ere they can reach their destined ground.
Now sinks the dirge's wailing sound,
Now cluster round the direful tree
That slow and solemn company,
While hymn mistuned and mutter'd prayer
The victim for his fate prepare."—
What glances o'er the greenwood shade?
The spear that marks the ambushade!
"Now, noble Chief! I leave thee loose;
Upon them, Ronald!" said the Bruce.

XXIX.

"The Bruce! the Bruce!" to well-known cry
His native rocks and woods reply.
"The Bruce! the Bruce!" in that dread word
The knell of hundred deaths was heard.
The astonish'd Southern gazed at first,
Where the wild tempest was to burst,
That waked in that presaging name.
Before, behind, around it came!
Half-arm'd, surpris'd, on every side
Hemm'd in, hew'd down, they bled and died.
Deep in the ring the Bruce engaged,
And fierce Clan-Colla's broadsword raged!
Full soon the few who fought were sped,
Nor better was their lot who fled,
And met, 'mid terror's wild career,
The Douglas's redoubted spear!
Two hundred yeomen on that morn
The castle left, and none return.

XXX.

Not on their flight press'd Ronald's brand,
A gentler duty claim'd his hand.
He raised the page, where on the plain
His fear had sunk him with the slain:
And twice, that morn, surprise well near
Betray'd the secret kept by fear;

Be brand of a disloyal Scot,
 And lasting infamy his lot!
 Sit gentle friends! our hour of glee
 Is brief, we'll spend it joyously!
 Blithest of all the sun's bright beams,
 When betwixt storm and storm he gleams,
 Well is our country's work begun,
 But more, far more, must yet be done.
 Speed messengers the country through;
 Arouse old friends, and gather new;*
 Warn Lanark's knights to gird their mail,
 Rouse the brave sons of Teviotdale,
 Let Ettrick's archers sharp their darts,†
 The fairest forms, the truest hearts!
 Call all, call all! from Reedswair-Path,
 To the Wild confines of Cape-Wrath;
 Wide let the news through Scotland ring,—
 The Northern Eagle claps his wing!"

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

O WHO, that shared them, ever shall forget
 The emotions of the spirit-rousing time,
 When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
 Early and late, at evening and at prime;
 When the loud cannon and the merry chime
 Hail'd news on news, as field on field was won,
 When Hope, long doubtful, soar'd at length sublime,
 And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
 Watch'd Joy's broad banner rise, to meet the rising sun!

O these were hours, when thrilling joy repaid
 A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears!
 The heart-sick faintness of the hope delay'd,
 The waste, the woe, the bloodshed, and the tears,
 That track'd with terror twenty rolling years,
 All was forgot in that blithe jubilee!
 Her downcast eye even pale Affliction rears,
 To sigh a thankful prayer, amid the glee,
 That hail'd the Despot's fall, and peace and liberty!

* Note 46.

† Note 47.

Such news o'er Scotland's hills triumphant rode,
 When 'gainst the invaders turn'd the battle's scale,
 When Bruce's banner had victorious flow'd *
 O'er Loudoun's mountain, and in Ury's vale;
 When English blood oft deluged Douglas-dale,†
 And fiery Edward routed stout St John,‡
 When Randolph's war-cry swell'd the Southern gale,§
 And many a fortress, town, and tower, was won,
 And fame still sounded forth fresh deeds of glory done.

II.

Blithe tidings flew from baron's tower,
 To peasant's cot, to forest bower,
 And waked the solitary cell,
 Where lone Saint Bride's recluses dwell.
 Princess no more, fair Isabel,
 A vot'ress of the order now,
 Say, did the rule that bid thee wear
 Dim veil and woollen scapulaire,
 And reft thy locks of dark-brown hair,
 That stern and rigid vow,
 Did it condemn the transport high,
 Which glisten'd in thy watery eye,
 When minstrel or when palmer told
 Each fresh exploit of Bruce the bold?—
 And whose the lovely form that shares
 Thy anxious hopes, thy fears, thy prayers?
 No sister she of convent shade;
 So say these locks in lengthen'd braid,
 So say the blushes and the sighs,
 The tremors that unbidden rise,
 When, mingled with the Bruce's fame,
 The brave Lord Ronald's praises came.

III.

Believe, his father's castle won,
 And his bold enterprise begun,
 That Bruce's earliest cares restore
 The speechless page to Arran's shore.
 Nor think that long the quaint disguise
 Conceal'd her from a sister's eyes;
 And sister-like in love they dwell
 In that lone convent's silent cell.
 There Bruce's slow assent allows
 Fair Isabel the veil and vows;
 And there, her sex's dress regain'd,
 The lovely Maid of Lorn remain'd,

* Note 48

† Note 49.

‡ Note 50.

§ Note 51.

VII.

"No! never to Lord Ronald's bower
Will I again as paramour"—
"Nay, hush thee, too impatient maid,
Until my final tale be said!—
The good King Robert would engage
Edith once more his elfin page,
By her own heart, and her own eye,
Her lover's penitence to try—
Safe in his royal charge, and free,
Should such thy final purpose be,
Again unknown to seek the cell,
And live and die with Isabel."
Thus spoke the maid—King Robert's eye,
Might have some glance of policy;
Dunstaffnage had the Monarch ta'en,
And Lorn had own'd King Robert's reign;
Her brother had to England fled,
And there in banishment was dead;
Ample, through exile, death and flight,
O'er tower and land was Edith's right;
This ample right o'er tower and land
Were safe in Ronald's faithful hand.

VIII.

Embarrass'd eye and blushing cheek,
Pleasure and shame and fear bespeak!
Yet much the reasoning Edith made:—
"Her sister's faith she must upbraid,
Who gave such secret, dark and dear,
In council to another's ear.
Why should she leave the peaceful cell?—
How should she part with Isabel?—
How wear that strange attire agen?—
How risk herself 'mid martial men?—
And how be guarded on the way?—
At least she might entreat delay."
Kind Isabel, with secret smile,
Saw and forgave the maiden's wile,
Reluctant to be thought to move
At the first call of truant love.

IX.

Oh, blame her not!—when zephyrs wake,
The aspen's trembling leaves must shake;
When beams the sun through April's shower,
It needs must bloom, the violet flower;
And Love, how'er the maiden strive,
Must with reviving hope revive!

A thousand soft excuses came,
 To plead his cause 'gainst virgin shame.
 Pledged by their sires in earliest youth,
 He had her plighted faith and truth—
 Then, 'twas her Liege's strict command,
 And she, beneath his royal hand,
 A ward in person and in land:—
 And, last, she was resolved to stay
 Only brief space—one little day—
 Close hidden in her safe disguise
 From all, but most from Ronald's eyes—
 But once to see him more!—nor blame
 Her wish—to hear him name her name!—
 Then, to bear back to solitude
 The thought he had his falsehood rued!
 But Isabel, who long had seen
 Her pallid cheek and pensive mien,
 And well herself the cause might know,
 Though innocent, of Edith's woe,
 Joy'd, generous, that revolving time
 Gave means to expiate the crime.
 High glow'd her bosom as she said,
 "Well shall her sufferings be repaid!"
 Now came the parting hour—a band
 From Arran's mountains left the land;
 Their chief, Fitz-Louis,* had the care
 The speechless Amadine to bear
 To Bruce, with honour, as behoved
 To page the Monarch dearly loved.

X.

The King had deem'd the maiden bright
 Should reach him long before the fight,
 But storms and fate her course delay:
 It was on eve of battle-day,
 When o'er the Gillie's-hill she rode.
 The landscape like a furnace glow'd,
 And far as e'er the eye was borne,
 The lences waved like autumn-corn.
 In battles four beneath their eye,†
 The forces of King Robert lie.
 And one below the hill was laid,
 Reserved for rescue and for aid;
 And three, advanced, form'd vaward-line,
 'Twixt Bannock's brook and Ninian's shrine.
 Detached was each, yet each so nigh
 As well might mutual aid supply.

* Note 56.

† Note 57.

Beyond, the Southern host appears,*
 A boundless wilderness of spears,
 Whose verge or rear the anxious eye
 Strove far, but strove in vain to spy.
 Thick flashing in the evening beam,
 Glaives, lances, bills, and banners gleam;
 And where the heaven join'd with the hill,
 Was distant armour flashing still,
 So wide, so far, the boundless host
 Seem'd in the blue horizon lost.

XI.

Down from the hill the maiden pass'd,
 At the wild show of war aghast;
 And traversed first the rearward host,
 Reserved for aid where needed most.
 The men of Carrick and of Ayr,
 Lennox and Lanark too, were there,
 And all the western land;
 With these the valiant of the Isles †
 Beneath their Chieftains rank'd their files,
 In many a plaided band.
 There, in the centre, proudly raised,
 The Bruce's royal standard blazed,
 And there Lord Ronald's banner bore
 A galley driven by sail and oar.
 A wild, yet pleasing contrast, made
 Warriors in mail and plate array'd,
 With the plumed bonnet and the plaid
 By these Hebrideans worn;
 But O! unseen for three long years,
 Dear was the garb of mountaineers
 To the fair Maid of Lorn!
 For one she look'd—but he was far
 Busied amid the ranks of war—
 Yet with affection's troubled eye
 She marked his banner boldly fly,
 Gave on the countless foe a glance,
 And thought on battle's desperate chance.

XII.

To centre of the vaward-line
 Fitz-Louis guided Amadine.
 Arm'd all on foot, that host appears
 A serried mass of glimmering spears
 There stood the Marchers' warlike band,
 The warriors there of Lodon's land;

* Note 58.

† Note 59.

Ettrick and Liddell bent the yew,
A band of archers fierce, though few;
The men of Nith and Annan's vale,
And the bold spears of Teviotdale;—
The dauntless Douglas these obey,
And the young Stuart's gentle sway.
North-eastward by Saint Ninian's shrine,
Beneath fierce Randolph's charge, combine
The warriors whom the hardy North
From Tay to Sutherland sent forth.
The rest of Scotland's war-array
With Edward Bruce to westward lay,
Where Bannock, with his broken bank
And deep ravine, protects their flank.
Behind them, screen'd by sheltering wood,
The gallant Keith, Lord Marshal, stood:
His men-at-arms bare mace and lance,
And plumes that wave, and helms that glance.
Thus fair divided by the King,
Centre, and right, and left-ward wing;
Composed his front; nor distant far
Was strong reserve to aid the war.
And 'twas to front of this array,
Her guide and Edith made their way.

XIII.

Here must they pause; for, in advance
As far as one might pitch a lance,
The Monarch rode along the van,*
The foe's approaching force to scan,
His line to marshal and to range,
And ranks to square, and fronts to change.
Alone he rode—from head to heel
Sheathed in his ready arms of steel;
Nor mounted yet on war-horse wight,
But, till more near the shock of fight,
Reining a palfrey low and light.
A diadem of gold was set
Above his bright steel basinet,
And clasped within its glittering twine
Was seen the glove of Argentine;
Truncheon or leading staff he lacks,
Bearing, instead, a battle-axe.
He ranged his soldiers for the fight,
Accoutred thus, in open sight
Of either host.—Three bowshots far,
Paused the deep front of England's war,

* Note 60.

And rested on their arms awhile,
To close and rank their warlike file,
And hold high council, if that night
Should view the strife, or dawning light.

XIV.

O gay, yet fearful to behold,
Flashing with steel and rough with gold,
And bristled o'er with bills and spears,
With plumes and pennons waving fair,
Was that bright battle-front! for there
Rode England's King and Peers:
And who, that saw that Monarch ride,
His kingdom battled by his side,
Could then his direful doom foretell!—
Fair was his seat in knightly selle,
And in his sprightly eye was set
Some spark of the Plantagenet.
Though light and wandering was his glance,
It flash'd at sight of shield and lance.
"Know'st thou," he said, "De Argentine,
Yon knight who marshals thus their line?"—
"The tokens on his helmet tell
The Bruce, my Liege: I know him well."—
"And shall the audacious traitor brave
The presence where our banners wave?"—
"So please my Liege," said Argentine,
"Were he but horsed on steed like mine,
To give him fair and knightly chance,
I would adventure forth my lance."—
"In battle-day, the King replied,
"Nice tourney rules are set aside.
—Still must the rebel dare our wrath?
Set on him—sweep him from our path!"
And at King Edward's signal, soon
Dash'd from the ranks Sir Henry Boune.

XV.

Of Hereford's high blood he came,
A race renown'd for knightly fame.
He burn'd before his Monarch's eye
To do some deed of chivalry.
He spurr'd his steed, he couch'd his lance,
And darted on the Bruce at once.
—As motionless as rocks, that bide
The wrath of the advancing tide,
The Bruce stood fast.—Each breast beat high,
And dazzled was each gazing eye—

The heart had hardly time to think,
The eyelid scarce had time to wink,
While on the King, like flash of flame,
Spurr'd to full speed the war-horse came!
The partridge may the falcon mock,
If that slight palfrey stand the shock—
But, swerving from the Knight's career,
Just as they met, Bruce shunn'd the spear.
Onward the baffled warrior bore
His course—but soon his course was o'er!—
High in his stirrups stood the King,
And gave his battle-axe the swing.
Right on De Boune, the whiles he pass'd,
Fell that stern dint—the first—the last!—
Such strength upon the blow was put,
The helmit crash'd like hazel-nut;
The axe-shaft, with its brazen clasp,
Was shiver'd to the gauntlet grasp.
Springs from the blow the startled horse,
Drops to the plain the lifeless corse;
—First of that fatal field, how soon,
How sudden, fell the fierce De Boune!

XVI.

One pitying glance the Monarch sped,
Where on the field his foe lay dead;
Then gently turn'd his palfrey's head,
And, pacing back his sober way,
Slowly he gain'd his own array.
There round their King the leaders crowd,
And blame his recklessness aloud,
That risk'd 'gainst each adventurous spear
A life so valued and so dear.
His broken weapon's shaft survey'd
The King, and careless answer made,—
“My loss may pay my folly's tax;
I've broke my trusty battle-axe.”
'Twas then Fitz-Louis, bending low,
Did Isabel's commission show;
Edith, disguis'd, at distance stands,
And hides her blushes with her hands.
The Monarch's brow has changed its hue,
Away the gory axe he threw,
While to the seeming page he drew,
Clearing war's terrors from his eye.
Her hand with gentle ease he took,
With such a kind protecting look,
As to a weak and timid boy
Might speak, that elder brother's care
And elder brother's love was there.

XVII.

"Fear not," he said, "young Amadine!"
 Then whisper'd, "Still that name be thine.
 Fate plays her wonted fantasy,
 Kind Amadine, with thee and me,
 And sends thee here in doubtful hour.
 But soon we are beyond her power;
 For on this chosen battle-plain,
 Victor or vanquish'd, I remain.
 Do thou to yonder hill repair;
 The followers of our host are there,
 And all who may not weapons bear.—
 Fitz-Louis, have him in thy care.—
 Joyful we meet, if all go well;
 If not, in Arran's holy cell
 Thou must take part with Isabel;
 For brave Lord Ronald, too, hath sworn,
 Not to regain the Maid of Lorn,
 (The bliss on earth he covets most,)
 Would he forsake his battle-post,
 Or shun the fortune that may fall
 To Bruce, to Scotland, and to all.—
 But, hark! some news these trumpets tell;
 Forgive my haste—farewell!—farewell!"
 And in a lower voice he said,
 "Be of good cheer—farewell, sweet maid!"—

XVIII.

"What train of dust, with trumpet-sound*
 And glimmering spears, is wheeling round
 Our leftward flank?"—the Monarch cried,
 To Moray's Earl who rode beside.
 "Lo! round thy station pass the foes!
 Randolph, thy wreath hath lost a rose."
 The Earl his visor closed, and said—
 "My wreath shall bloom, or life shall fade.—
 "Follow, my household!"—And they go
 Like lightning on the advancing foe.
 "My Liege," said noble Douglas then,
 "Earl Randolph has but one to ten:
 Let me go forth his band to aid!"
 —"Stir not. The error he hath made,
 Let him amend it as he may;
 I will not weaken mine array."
 Then loudly rose the conflict-cry,
 And Douglas's brave heart swell'd high,—
 "My Liege," he said, "with patient ear
 I must not Moray's death-knell hear!"—

* Note 61.

"Then go—but speed thee back again."—
 Forth sprung the Douglas with his train:
 But, when they won a rising hill,
 He bade his followers hold them still.—
 "See, see! the routed Southern fly!
 The Earl hath won the victory.
 Lo! where yon steeds run masterless,
 His banner towers above the press.
 Rein up; our presence would impair
 The fame we come too late to share."
 Back to the host the Douglas rode,
 And soon glad tidings are abroad,
 That, Dayncourt by stout Randolph slain,
 His followers fled with loosen'd rein.—
 That skirmish closed the busy day,
 And couch'd in battle's prompt array,
 Each army on their weapons lay.

XIX.

It was a night of lovely June,
 High rode in cloudless blue the moon,
 Demyet smiled beneath her ray;
 Old Stirling's towers arose in light,
 And, twined in links of silver bright,
 Her winding river lay.
 Ah! gentle planet! other sight
 Shall greet thee, next returning night,
 Of broken arms and banners tore,
 And marshes dark with human gore,
 And piles of slaughter'd men and horse,
 And Forth that floats the frequent corse,
 And many a wounded wretch to plain
 Beneath thy silver light in vain!
 But now, from England's host, the cry
 Thou hear'st of wassail revelry,
 While from the Scottish legions pass
 The murmur'd prayer, the early mass!—
 Here, numbers had presumption given;
 There, bands o'er-match'd sought aid from Heaven.

XX.

On Gillic's-hill, whose height commands
 The battle-field, fair Edith stands,
 With serf and page unfit for war,
 To eye the conflict from afar.
 O! with what doubtful agony
 She sees the dawning tint the sky!—
 Now on the Ochils gleams the sun,
 And glistens now Demyet dun;

Is it the lark that carols shrill,
 Is it the bittern's early hum?
 No!—distant, but increasing still,
 The trumpet's sound swells up the hill,
 With the deep murmur of the drum.
 Responsive from the Scottish host,
 Pipe-clang, and bugle-sound were toss'd,*
 His breast and brow each soldier cross'd,
 And started from the ground;
 Arm'd and array'd for instant fight,
 Rose archer, spearman, squire, and knight,
 And in the pomp of battle bright
 The dread battalia frown'd.

XXI.

Now onward, and in open view,
 The countless ranks of England drew,†
 Dark rolling like the ocean-tide,
 When the rough west hath chafed his pride,
 And his deep roar sends challenge wide
 To all that bars his way!
 In front the gallant archers trode,
 The men-at-arms behind them rode,
 And midmost of the phalanx broad
 The Monarch held his sway.
 Beside him many a war-horse fumes,
 Around him waves a sea of plumes,
 Where many a knight in battle known,
 And some who spurs had first braced on,
 And deem'd that fight should see them won,
 King Edward's hests obey.
 De Argentine attends his side,
 With stout De Valence, Pembroke's pride,
 Selected champions from the train,
 To wait upon his bridle-rein.
 Upon the Scottish foe he gazed—
 —At once, before his sight amazed.
 Sunk banner, spear, and shield;
 Each weapon-point is downward sent,
 Each warrior to the ground is bent.
 "The rebels, Argentine, repent!
 For pardon they have kneel'd."—
 "Aye!—but they bend to other powers,
 And other pardon sue than ours!
 See where yon bare-foot Abbot stands,‡
 And blesses them with lifted-hands!

* Note 62.

† Note 63.

‡ Note 64.

Upon the spot where they have kneel'd,
These men will die, or win the field."—
—Then prove we if they die or win!
Bid Gloster's Earl the fight begin."

XXII.

Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high,
Just as the Northern ranks arose,
Signal for England's archery
To halt and bend their bows.
Then stepp'd each yeoman forth a pace,
Glanced at the intervening space,
And raised his left hand high;
To the right ear the cords they bring—
—At once ten thousand bow-strings ring,
Ten thousand arrows fly!
Nor paused on the devoted Scot
The ceaseless fury of their shot;
As fiercely and as fast,
Forth whistling came the grey-goose wing
As the wild hailstones pelt and ring
Adown December's blast.
Nor mountain targe of tough bull-hide,
Nor lowland mail, that storm may bide;
Woe, woe to Scotland's banner'd pride,
If the fell shower may last!
Upon the right, behind the wood,
Each by his steed dismounted, stood
The Scottish chivalry;—
—With foot in stirrup, hand on mane,
Fierce Edward Bruce can scarce restrain
His own keen heart, his eager train,
Until the archers gain'd the plain;
Then, "Mount, ye gallants free!"
He cried; and, vaulting from the ground,
His saddle every horseman found.
On high their glittering crests they toss,
As springs the wild-fire from the moss;
The shield hangs down on every breast,
Each ready lance is in the rest,
And loud shouts Edward Bruce,—
"Forth, Marshal! on the peasant foe!*"
We'll tame the terrors of their bow,
And cut the bow-string loose!"

XXIII.

Then spurs were dash'd in chargers' flanks,
They rush'd among the archer ranks,

* Note 65.

No spears were there the shock to let,
 No stakes to turn the charge were set,
 And how shall yeomen's armour slight,
 Stand the long lance and mace of might?
 Or what may their short swords avail,
 'Gainst barbed horse and shirt of mail?
 Amid their ranks the chargers sprung,
 High o'er their heads the weapons swung,
 And shriek and groan and vengeful shout
 Give note of triumph and of rout!
 Awhile, with stubborn hardihood,
 Their English hearts the strife made good.
 Borne down at length on every side,
 Compell'd to flight they scatter wide.—
 Let stags of Sherwood leap for glee,
 And bound the deer of Dallom-Lee!
 The broken bows of Bannock's shore
 Shall in the greenwood ring no more!
 Round Wakefield's merry May-pole now,
 The maids may twine the summer bough,
 May northward look with longing glance,
 For those that wont to lead the dance,
 For the blithe archers look in vain!
 Broken, dispersed, in flight o'erta'en,
 Pierced through, trode down, by thousands slain,
 They cumber Bannock's bloody plain.

XXIV.

The King with scorn beheld their flight.
 "Are these," he said, "our yeomen wight?
 Each braggart churl could boast before,
 Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore!
 Fitter to plunder chase or park,
 Than make a manly foe their mark.—
 Forward, each gentleman and knight!
 Let gentle blood show generous might,
 And chivalry redeem the fight!"
 To rightward of the wild affray,
 The field show'd fair and level way;
 But, in mid-space, the Bruce's care,
 Had bored the ground with many a pit,
 With turf and brushwood hidden yet,
 That form'd a ghastly snare.
 Rushing, ten thousand horsemen came,
 With spears in rest, and hearts on flame,
 That panted for the shock!
 With blazing crests and banners spread,
 And trumpet-clang and clamour dread,
 The wide plain thunder'd to their tread,
 As far as Stirling rock,

Down! down! in headlong overthrow,
Horseman and horse, the foremost go,
 Wild floundering on the field!
The first are in destruction's gorge,
Their followers wildly o'er them urge;—
 The knightly helm and shield,
The mail, the acton, and the spear,
Strong hand, high heart, are useless here!
Loud from the mass confused the cry
Of dying warriors swells on high,
And steeds that shriek in agony!
They came like mountain-torrent red,
That thunders o'er its rocky bed,
They broke like that same torrent's wave,
When swallow'd by a darksome cave.
Billows on billows burst and boil,
Maintaining still the stern turmoil,
And to their wild and tortured groan
Each adds new terrors of his own!

XXV.

Too strong in courage and in might
Was England yet, to yield the fight.
 Her noblest all are here;
Names that to fear were never known,
Bold Norfolk's Earl De Brotherton,
 And Oxford's famed De Vere.
There Gloster plied the bloody sword,
And Berkley, Grey, and Hereford,
 Bottetourt and Sanzavere,
Ross, Montague, and Mauley came,
And Courtenay's pride, and Percy's fame—
Names known too well in Scotland's war,
At Falkirk, Methven, and Dunbar,
Blazed broader yet in after years,
At Cressy red and fell Poitiers.
Pembroke with these, and Argentine,
Brought up the rearward battle-line.
With caution o'er the ground they tread,
Slippery with blood and piled with dead,
Till hand to hand in battle set,
The bills with spears and axes met,
And, closing dark on every side,
Raged the full contest far and wide.
Then was the strength of Douglas tried,
Then proved was Randolph's generous pride,
And well did Stewart's actions grace
The sire of Scotland's royal race!
 Firmly they kept their ground;

As firmly England onward press'd,
And down went many a noble crest,
And rent was many a valiant breast,
And Slaughter revell'd round.

XXVI.

Unflinching foot 'gainst foot was set,
Unceasing blow by blow was met;
The groans of those who fell
Were drown'd amid the shriller clang,
That from the blades and harness rang,
And in the battle-yell.
Yet fast they fell, unheard, forgot,
Both Southern fierce and hardy Scot;
And O! amid that waste of life,
What various motives fired the strife!
The aspiring Noble bled for fame,
The Patriot for his country's claim;
This Knight his youthful strength to prove,
And that to win his lady's love;
Some fought from ruffian thirst of blood,
From habit some, or hardihood.
But ruffian stern, and soldier good,
The noble and the slave,
From various cause the same wild road,
On the same bloody morning, trode,
To that dark inn, the grave!

XXVII.

The tug of strife to flag begins,
Though neither loses yet nor wins.
High rides the sun, thick rolls the dust,
And feebler speeds the blow and thrust.
Douglas leans on his war-sword now,
And Randolph wipes his bloody brow;
Nor less had toil'd each Southern knight,
From morn till mid-day in the fight.
Strong Egremont for air must gasp,
Beauchamp undoes his visor-clasp,
And Montague must quit his spear,
And sinks thy falchion, bold Le Vere!
The blows of Berkley fall less fast,
And gallant Pembroke's bugle-blast
Hath lost it's lively tone;
Sinks, Argentine, thy battle-word,
And Percy's shout was fainter heard,—
“My merry-men, fight on!”

XXVIII.

Bruce, with the pilot's wary eye,
The slackening of the storm could spy.
"One effort more, and Scotland's free!
Lord of Isles, my trust in thee *
Is firm as Ailsa Rock;
Rush on with Highland sword and targe,
I, with my Carrick spearmen, charge;
Now, forward to the shock!"
At once the spears were forward thrown,
Against the sun the broadswords shone;
The pibroch lent its maddening tone,
And loud King Robert's voice was known—
"Carrick, press on—they fail, they fail!
Press on, brave sons of Innisgail,
The foe is fainting fast!
Each strike for parent, child, and wife,
For Scotland, liberty, and life,—
The battle cannot last!"

XXIX.

The fresh and desperate onset bore
The foes three furlongs back and more,
Leaving their noblest in their gore. •
Alone, De Argentine
Yet bears on high his red-cross shield,
Gathers the relics of the field,
Renews the ranks where they have reel'd,
And still makes good the line.
Brief strife, but fierce, his efforts raise
A bright but momentary blaze.
Fair Edith heard the Southern shout,
Beheld them turning from the rout,
Heard the wild call their trumpets sent,
In notes 'twixt triumph and lament.
That rallying force combined anew,
Appear'd in her distracted view,
To hem the Islemen round;
"O God! the combat they renew,
And is no rescue found!
And ye that look thus tamely on,
And see your native land o'erthrown,
O! are your hearts of flesh or stone?"

XXX.

The multitude that watch'd afar,
Rejected from the ranks of war,

* Note 66.

Had not unmoved beheld the fight,
 When strove the Bruce for Scotland's right;
 Each heart had caught the patriot spark,
 Old man and stripling, priest and clerk,
 Bondsman and serf; even female hand
 Stretch'd to the hatchet or the brand;
 But, when mute Amadine they heard
 Give to their zeal his signal-word,
 A frenzy fired the throng;—
 "Portents and miracles impeach
 Our sloth—the dumb our duties teach—
 And he that gives the mute his speech,
 Can bid the weak be strong
 To us, as to our lords, are given
 A native earth, a promised heaven;
 To us, as to our lords, belongs
 The vengeance for our nation's wrongs;
 The choice, 'twixt death or freedom, warms
 Our breasts as theirs—To arms! to arms!"
 To arms they flew,—axe, club, or spear,—
 And mimic ensigns high they rear,*
 And, like a banner'd host afar,
 Bear down on England's wearied war.

XXXI.

Already scatter'd o'er the plain,
 Reproof, command, and counsel vain,
 The rearward squadrons fled amain,
 Or made but doubtful stay;—
 But when they mark'd the seeming show
 Of fresh and fierce and marshall'd foe,
 The boldest broke array.
 O give their hapless prince his due! †
 In vain the Royal Edward threw
 His person, 'mid the spears,
 Cried, "Fight!" to terror and despair,
 Menaced, and wept, and tore his hair,
 And cursed their caitiff fears;
 Till Pembroke turn'd his bridle rein,
 And forced him from the fatal plain.
 With them rode Argentine, until
 They gain'd the summit of the hill,
 But quitted there the train:—
 "In yonder field a gage I left,
 I must not live of fame bereft;
 I needs must turn again.

* Note 67.

† Note 68.

Speed hence, my Liege, for on your trace
 The fiery Douglas takes the chase,
 I know his banner well.
 God send my Sovereign joy and bliss,
 And many a happier field than this!—
 Once more, my Liege, farewell!"

XXXII.

Again he faced the battle-field,—
 Wildly they fly, are slain, or yield.
 "Now then," he said, and couch'd his spear,
 "My course is run, the goal is near;
 One effort more, one brave career,
 Must close this race of mine."
 Then in his stirrups rising high,
 He shouted loud his battle-cry,
 "St James for Argentine!"
 And, of the bold pursuers, four
 The gallant knight from saddle bore;
 But not unharm'd—a lance's point
 Has found his breastplate's loosen'd joint,
 An axe has razed his crest;
 Yet still on Colonsay's fierce lord,
 Who press'd the chase with gory sword,
 He rode with spear in rest,
 And through his bloody tartans bored,
 And through his gallant breast.
 Nail'd to the earth, the mountaineer
 Yet writhed him up against the spear,
 And swung his broadsword round!
 —Stirrup, steel-boot, and cuish gave way,
 Beneath that blow's tremendous sway,
 The blood gush'd from the wound;
 And the grim Lord of Colonsay
 Hath turn'd him on the ground,
 And laugh'd in death-pang that his blade
 The mortal thrust so well repaid.

XXXIII.

Now toil'd the Bruce, the battle done,
 To use his conquest boldly won;
 And gave command for horse and spear
 To press the Southern's scatter'd rear,
 Nor let his broken force combine,
 —When the war-cry of Argentine
 Fell faintly on his ear;
 "Save, save his life," he cried, "O save
 The kind, the noble, and the brave!"
 The squadrons round free passage gave,
 The wounded knight drew near;

He raised his red-cross shield no more,
 Helm, cuish, and breastplate stream'd with gore,
 Yet, as he saw the King advance,
 He strove even then to couch his lance—
 The effort was in vain!
 The spur-stroke fail'd to rouse the horse;
 Wounded and weary, in mid course
 He stumbled on the plain.
 Then foremost was the generous Bruce
 To raise his head, his helm to loose;—
 “Lord Earl, the day is thine!
 My sovereign's charge, and adverse fate,
 Have made our meeting all too late:
 Yet this may Argentine,
 As boon from ancient comrade, crave—
 A Christian's mass, a soldier's grave.”

XXXIV.

Bruce press'd his dying hand—its grasp
 Kindly replied; but, in his clasp,
 It stiffen'd and grew cold—
 “And, O farewell!” the victor cried,
 “Of chivalry the flower and pride,
 The arm in battle bold,
 The courteous mien, the noble race,
 The stainless faith, the manly face! —
 Bid Ninian's convent light their shrine,
 For late-wake of De Argentine.
 O'er better knight on death-bier laid,
 Torch never gleam'd nor mass was said!”

XXXV.

Nor for De Argentine alone,
 Through Ninian's church these torches shone,
 And rose the death-prayer's awful tone.
 That yellow lustre glimmer'd pale,
 On broken plate and bloodied mail,
 Rent crest and shatter'd coronet,
 Of Baron, Earl, and Banneret;
 And the best names that England knew,
 Claim'd in the death-prayer dismal due.
 Yet mourn not, Land of Fame!
 Though ne'er the Leopards on thy shield
 Retreated from so sad a field,
 Since Norman William came.
 Oft may thine annals justly boast
 Of battles stern by Scotland lost;
 Grudge not her victory,

When for her freeborn rights she strove;
Rights dear to all who freedom love,
To none so dear as thee!

XXXVI.

Turn we to Bruce, whose curious ear
Must from Fitz-Louis tidings hear;
With him, a hundred voices tell
Of prodigy and miracle,
"For the mute page had spoke."—
"Page!" said Fitz-Louis, "rather say,
An angel sent from realms of day,
To burst the English yoke.
I saw his plume and bonnet drop,
When hurrying from the mountain top;
A lovely brow, dark locks that wave,
To his bright eyes new lustre gave,
A step as light upon the green,
As if his pinions waved unseen!"
"Spoke he with none?"—"With none—one word
Burst when he saw the Island Lord
Returning from the battle-field."—
"What answer made the Chief?"—"He kneel'd,
Durst not look up, but mutter'd low,
Some mingled sounds that none might know,
And greeted him 'twixt joy and fear,
As being of superior sphere."

XXXVII.

Even upon Bannock's bloody plain,
Heap'd then with thousands of the slain,
'Mid victor monarch's musings high,
Mirth laugh'd in good King Robert's eye:—
"And bore he such angelic air,
Such noble front, such waving hair?
Hath Ronald kneel'd to him?" he said;
"Then must we call the church to aid—
Our will be to the Abbot known,
Ere these strange news are wider blown,
To Cambuskenneth straight ye pass,
And deck the church for solemn mass;
To pay for high deliverance given,
A nation's thanks to gracious Heaven.
Let him array, besides, such state,
As should on princes' nuptials wait.
Ourself the cause, through fortune's spite,
That once broke short that spousal rite,
Ourself will grace, with early morn,
The Bridal of the Maid of Lorn.

CONCLUSION.

Go forth, my Song, upon thy venturous way;
Go boldly forth; nor yet thy master blame,
Who chose no patron for his humble lay,
And graced thy numbers with no friendly name,
Whose partial zeal might smooth thy path to fame.
There was—and O! how many sorrows crowd
Into these two brief words!—*there was* a claim
By generous friendship given—had fate allow'd,
It well had bid thee rank the proudest of the proud!

All angel now—yet little less than all,
While still a pilgrim in our world below!
What 'vails it us that patience to recall,
Which hid its own to soothe all other woes;
What 'vails to tell, how Virtue's purest glow
Shone yet more lovely in a form so fair:
And, least of all, what 'vails the world should know,
That one poor garland, twined to deck thy hair,
Is hung upon thy hearse, to droop and wither there!

NOTES.

NOTE 1, Page 6.—“*Will long pursue the minstrel's bark.*”

The seal displays a taste for music, which could scarcely be expected from his habits and predilections. They will long follow a boat in which any musical instrument is played, and even a tune simply whistled has attractions for them. The Diem of the Isles says of Heiskar, a small uninhabited rock, about twelve miles from the Isle of Uist, that an infinite slaughter of seals takes place there.

NOTE 2, Page 9.—“*Dark Mull! thy mighty Sound.*”

The Sound of Mull, which divides that island from the continent of Scotland, is one of the most striking scenes which the Hebrides afford to the traveller (tourist?). Sailing (steaming?) from Oban to Aros, or Tobermory, through a narrow channel, yet deep enough to bear vessels of the largest burthen, he has on his left the bold and mountainous shores of Mull, on the right those of that district of Argyleshire called Morvern, successively indented by deep salt water lochs, running up many miles inland. To the south-eastward arise a prodigious range of mountains, among which Cruchan-Ben is pre-eminent. And to the north-west is the no less large and picturesque range of the Ardnamurchan hills. Many ruinous castles, situated generally upon cliffs overhanging the ocean, add interest to the scene. Those of Dunolly and Dunstaffnage are first passed, then that of Duart, formerly belonging to the chief of the warlike and powerful sept of MacLeans, and the scene of Miss Baillie's beautiful Tragedy entitled the “*Family Legend*.” (*It may be added also, of Campbell's Lyric of “Glenara, Glenara, now read me my dream!”*) Still passing on to the northward, Artornish and Aros became visible upon the opposite shores, and lastly, Mingarry, and other ruins of less distinguished note. In fine weather, a grander and more impressive scene, both from its natural beauties, and associations with ancient history and tradition, can hardly be imagined. In unsettled weather, a stranger, if not much accustomed to the sea, may sometimes add to the other sublime sensations excited by the scene, that feeling of dignity which arises from a sense of danger.

NOTE 3, Page 9.—“*From Hirt, to the green Islay's fertile shore.*”

The number of the western isles of Scotland exceeds two hundred, of which St Kilda is the most northerly, anciently called Hirth, or Hirt, probably from “earth,” being, in fact, the whole globe to the inhabitants. Islay is by far the most fertile of the Hebrides, and has been greatly improved. This was in ancient times the principal abode of the Lord of the Isles, being, if not the largest, the most important island of the Archipelago.

NOTE 4, Page 9.—“*Where Mingarry, sternly placed.*”

The castle of Mingarry is situated on the sea-coast of the district of Ardnamurchan. The ruins, which are tolerably entire, are surrounded by a very high wall, forming a kind of polygon, for the purpose of adapting itself to the projecting angles of a precipice overhanging the sea, on which the castle stands. It was anciently the residence of the MacLeans, a clan of MacDonalds, descended from Ian, or John, a grandson of Angus Og, Lord of the Isles.

NOTE 5, Page 9.—“*The Heir of mighty Somerled.*”

Somerled was thane of Argyle and Lord of the Isles, about the middle of the twelfth century. He seems to have exercised his authority in both capacities, independent of the crown of Scotland, against which he often stood in hostility. He made various incursions upon the western Lowlands during the reign of Malcolm IV., and seems to have made peace with him upon the terms of an independent prince, about the year 1157. In 1164 he resumed the war against Malcolm, and invaded Scotland with a large, but probably a tumultuary army, collected in the isles, in the mainland of Argyleshire, and in the neighbouring provinces of Ireland. He was defeated and slain in an engagement with a very inferior force, near Kenfrew. His son Gillicolane fell in the same battle. This mighty chieftain married a daughter of Olaus, King of Man. From him our

genealogists deduce two dynasties, distinguished in the stormy history of the middle ages; the Lords of the Isles descended from his elder son Ronald, and the Lords of Lorn were surnamed M'Dougal, as descended of his second son Dougal. That Somerled's territories upon the mainland, and upon the islands, should have been divided between his two sons, instead of passing to the elder, illustrates the uncertainty of descent among the great Highland families.

NOTE 6, Page 9.—“*Lord of the Isles, whose lofty name.*”

The representative of this independent principality, for such it seems to have been, though acknowledging occasionally the pre-eminence of the Scottish crown, was, at the period of the poem, Angus, called Angus Og; but the name has been, *euphonia gratia*, exchanged for that of Ronald, which frequently occurs in the genealogy. Angus was a protector of Robert Bruce, whom he received in his castle of Dunnaverty, during the time of his greatest distress.—[*Dunnaverty, South-end, Campbelton, near to the Mull of Cantyre.*]

NOTE 7, Page 11.—“*House of Lorn.*”

The house of Lorn was, like that of the Lord of the Isles, descended from a son of Somerled, slain at Renfrew, in 1164. This son obtained the succession of his mainland territories, comprehending the greater part of the three districts of Lorn, in Argyleshire, and the possessors of such extensive authority of course might rather be considered as petty princes, than feudal barons. They assumed the patronymic appellation of MacDougal, by which they are distinguished in the history of the middle ages. The Lord of Lorn, who flourished during the reign of Bruce, was Allaster of Argyle. He had married the third daughter of John, the Red Comyn, who was slain by Bruce in the Dominican church at Dumfries.

“*He that now bears shall wreak the wrong.*”

Allaster of Lorn was a mortal enemy of that prince, and more than once reduced him to great straits during the early and distressed period of his reign. Bruce, when he began to obtain an ascendancy in Scotland, took the first opportunity in his power to requite these injuries. He marched into Argyleshire to lay waste the country. John of Lorn, son of the chieftain, was posted with his followers in the formidable pass between Dalmally and Bunawe. It is a narrow path along the verge of the large and precipitous mountain called Cruchan-Ben, and guarded on the other side by a precipice overhanging Loch-Awe. The pass seems to the eye of a soldier as strong as it is wild and romantic to that of an ordinary traveller. But the skill of Bruce had anticipated this difficulty; while his main body, engaged in a skirmish with the men of Lorn, confined their attention to the front of their position, James Douglas, with Sir Alexander Fraser, Sir William Wiseman, and Sir Andrew Grey, ascended the mountain with a select body of archery, and obtained possession of the heights which commanded the pass. A volley of arrows descending from them, directly warned the Argyleshire men of their perilous position, and their resistance, which had hitherto been bold and manly, was changed into a precipitate flight. The deep and rapid river of Awe was then (we learn the fact from Buchanan, with some surprise) crossed by a bridge (*scarce credible it should have so been*). This bridge the mountaineers attempted to demolish, but Bruce's followers were too close upon their rear; they were, therefore, without refuge or defence, and were dispersed with great slaughter. After this decisive engagement, Bruce laid waste Argyleshire, and besieged Dunstaffnage Castle, on the western shore of Lorn, compelled it to surrender, and placed in that principal stronghold of the MacDougals a garrison and governor of his own. The house of MacDougal affords a very rare, if not an unique, instance of a family of such unlimited power, and so distinguished during the middle ages, surviving the decay of their grandeur, and flourishing in a private station. The Castle of Dunolly, near Oban, with its dependencies, was the principal part of what remained to them, with their right of chieftainship over the families of their name and blood. These they contrived to enjoy until the year 1715, when the representative incurred the penalty of forfeiture, for his accession to the insurrection of that period. The estate was, however, restored about 1745, the chief of that day having remained quiet on that occasion; and thus regained his property, when many Highland chiefs lost their's.

NOTE 8, Page 15.—“*Those lightnings of the wave.*”

The phenomenon called by sailors Sea-fire, is one of the most beautiful and interesting which is witnessed in the Hebrides: at times the ocean appears entirely illuminated around the vessel, and a long train of lambent coruscations are per-

petually bursting upon the sides of the vessel, or pursuing her wake through the darkness. These phosphoric appearances, concerning the origin of which naturalists are not agreed in opinion, seem to be called into action by the rapid motion of the ship through the water, and are probably owing to the water being saturated with fish-spawn, or other animal substances.

NOTE 9, Page 16.—“*Sought the dark fortress by a stair.*”

The fortress of a Hebridean chief was almost always on the sea-shore, for the facility of communication which the ocean afforded. Nothing can be more wild than the situations which they chose, and the devices by which the architects endeavoured to defend them. Narrow stairs and arched vaults were the usual mode of access, and the draw-bridge appears at Dunstaffnage, and elsewhere, to have fallen from the gate of the building to the top of such a staircase; so that any one advancing with hostile purpose, found himself in a state of exposed and precarious elevation, with a gulph between him and the object of his attack. These fortresses were guarded with equal care. The duty of the watch devolved chiefly upon an officer called the Cockman, who had the charge of challenging all who approached the castle.

NOTE 10, Page 20.—“*That keen knight, De Argentine.*”

Sir Egidias, or Giles De Argentine, was one of the most accomplished knights of the period. He had served in the wars of Henry of Luxembourg with such high reputation that he was, in popular estimation, the third worthy of the age. Those to whom fame assigned precedence over him were Henry of Luxembourg himself, and Robert Bruce. Argentine had warred in Palestine, encountered thrice with the Saracens, and had slain two antagonists in each engagement—an easy matter, he said, for one Christian knight to slay two Pagan dogs. His death corresponded with his high character. With Aymer de Valance, Earl of Pembroke, he was appointed to attend immediately upon the person of Edward II. When the day was utterly lost, they forced the King from the field. De Argentine saw the King safe from immediate danger, and then took his leave of him. “God be with you, Sir,” he said; “’tis not my wont to fly.” So, raising his battle cry, he threw himself into the melee, and fell there.

NOTE 11, Page 21.—“*‘Fill me the mighty cup,’ he said.*”

A Hebridean drinking cup, of the most ancient and curious workmanship, has been long preserved in the castle of Dunvegan, the romantic seat of MacLeod, the chief of that ancient and powerful clan. The horn of Rorie More, preserved in the same family, and recorded by Dr Johnson, is not to be compared with this piece of antiquity, which is one of the greatest curiosities in Scotland. It is nine inches and three-quarters in inside depth, and ten and a half in height on the outside, the extreme measure over the lips being four inches and a half. The cup is divided into two parts by a wrought ledge, beautifully ornamented, about three-fourths of an inch in breadth. Beneath this ledge the shape of the cup is rounded off, and terminates in a flat circle, like that of a teacup: four short feet support the whole. Above the projecting ledge the shape of the cup is nearly square, projecting outward at the brim. The cup is made of wood (oak to all appearance), but most curiously wrought and embossed with silver-work, which projects from the vessel. There are a number of regular projecting sockets, which appear to have been set with stones; two or three of them still hold pieces of coral, the rest are empty. At the four corners of the projecting ledge, or cornice, are four sockets, much larger, probably for pebbles or precious stones. The workmanship of the silver is extremely elegant, and appears to have been highly gilded. The ledge, brim, and legs of the cup, are of silver. The family tradition bears that it was the property of Neil Ghlune-dhu, or Black-knee.

NOTE 12, Page 22.—“*The Seneschal the presence scann’d.*”

The Server, to whom, rather than the Seneschal, the office of arranging the guests of an island chief appertained, was an office of importance in the family of an Hebridean chief. “Every family had commonly two stewards—the first served always at home, and was obliged to be versed in the pedigree of all the tribes in the Isles, and in the Highlands of Scotland; for it was his province to assign every man at table his seat, according to his quality; and this was done without one word speaking, only by drawing a score with a white rod, which this marischal held in his hand, before the person who was bid by him to sit down.”—MARTIN’S WESTERN ISLES.

NOTE 13, Page 23.—“*With Carrick's outlawed Chief.*”

It must be remembered by all who have read the Scottish history, that after he had slain Comyn at Dumfries, and asserted his right to the Scottish crown, Robert Bruce was reduced to the greatest extremity by the English and their adherents. He was crowned at Scone by the general consent of the Scottish barons, but his authority endured but a short time. According to the phrase said to have been used by his wife, he was for that year “a summer king, but not a winter one.” On the 29th March, 1306, he was crowned king at Scone. Upon the 19th June in the same year, he was totally defeated at Methven, near Perth; and his most important adherents, with few exceptions, either executed, or compelled to embrace the English interest, for safety of their lives and fortunes. After this disaster, his life was that of an outlaw, rather than that of a candidate for monarchy. After many perilous adventures, and being driven to extremities, he separated himself from the females of his retinue, whom he sent for safety to the castle of Kildrummy, in Aberdeenshire, where they afterwards became captives to England. From Aberdeenshire Bruce retreated to the mountainous parts of Breadalbane, and approached the borders of Argyleshire. There he was defeated by the Lord of Lorn, who had assumed arms against him in revenge of the death of his relative, John the Red Comyn. Escaped from this peril, Bruce, with his few attendants, subsisted by hunting and fishing, until the weather compelled them to seek better sustenance and shelter than the Highland mountains afforded. With great difficulty they crossed, from Rowardennan probably, to the western banks of Loch-Lomond, partly in a miserable boat and partly by swimming. The valiant and loyal Earl of Lennox, to whose territories they had now found their way, welcomed them with tears, but was unable to assist them to make an effectual band. The Lord of the Isles, then in possession of great part of Cantyre, received the fugitive monarch and future restorer of his country's independence, in his castle of Dunaverty, in that district (extreme south). But treason, says Barbour, was so general, that the King durst not abide there. With the remnant of his followers, Bruce embarked for Rath-Erin, or Rathrin (Rathlin), the Recina of Ptolomy, a small island lying almost opposite to the shores of Ballycastle, on the coast of Ireland. The islanders at first fled from their new and armed guests, but upon some explanation submitted themselves to Bruce's sovereignty. He resided among them until the approach of spring (1307), when he again returned to Scotland, with the desperate resolution to re-conquer his kingdom or perish in the attempt. The progress of his success forms the brightest period in Scottish history.

NOTE 14.—“DUNOLLY.”

Nothing can be more wildly beautiful than the situation of Dunolly. The ruins are situated upon a bold and precipitous promontory, overhanging Loch-Etive (the bay of Oban), and distant about a mile from the village and port of Oban. The principal part which remains is the donjon or keep; but fragments of other buildings, overgrown with ivy, attest that it had been once a place of importance, as large, apparently, as Artornish or Dunstaffnage. These fragments include a court-yard, of which the keep probably formed one side,—the entrance being by a steep ascent from the neck of the isthmus, formerly cut across by a moat, and defended, doubtless, by outworks and a draw-bridge. Beneath the castle stands the present mansion of the family, having on the one hand Loch-Etive (*the Linnhe-Loch*), with its islands and mountains, on the other, two romantic eminences, tufted with copsewood. There are other accompaniments suited to the scene,—in particular, a huge upright pillar, or detached fragment of that sort of rock called plumb-pudding stone, upon the shore, about a quarter of a mile from the castle. It is called *clach-na-cua*, or the dog's pillar, because Fingal is said to have used it as a stake to which he bound his celebrated dog Bran. Others say, that when the Lord of the Isles came upon a visit to the Lord of Lorn, the dogs brought for his sport were kept beside this pillar. Upon the whole, a more romantic spot can scarce be conceived; and it receives a moral interest from the consideration attached to the residence of a family once powerful enough to confront and defeat Robert Bruce, and now sunk into the shade of private life.

NOTE 15, Page 24.—“*The Brooch of Lorn.*”

According to Barbour, the king, with about three hundred men, encountered Lorn with about a thousand Argyleshire men in Glen-Dochart, at the head of Breadalbane, near Tyndrum. The field of action is still called Dalry, or the King's field. The field of battle was unfavourable to Bruce's adherents, who were chiefly men at arms. Many of the horses were slain by the pole-axes, of which the Argyleshire Scottish had learned the use from the Norwegians. At

length Bruce commanded a retreat up a narrow and difficult pass, he himself bringing up the rear, and repeatedly turning and driving back the more venturous assailants. Two brothers, the strongest among Lorn's followers, resolved to rid their chief of this formidable foe. A third person, the MacKeech of the family tradition, associated himself with them for this purpose. They waited their opportunity, until Bruce's party had entered a pass between the loch and a precipice, where the king, who was the last of the party, had scarce room to manage his steed. Here the three foes sprang upon him at once. One seized his bridle, but received a wound which pared off his arm; a second grasped Bruce by the stirrup and leg, and endeavoured to dismount him, but the king, putting spurs to his horse, threw him down, still holding by the stirrup; the third, taking advantage of an acclivity, sprang up behind him upon his horse. Bruce, however, whose personal strength is uniformly mentioned as exceeding that of most men, extricated himself from his grasp, threw him to the ground, and cleft his skull with his sword. By similar exertion he drew his stirrup from his grasp whom he had overthrown, and killed him also with his sword as he lay among his horse's feet. MacNaughton, a baron of Cowal, pointed out to the Lord of Lorn the deeds of valour which Bruce performed in this memorable retreat, with the highest expressions of admiration. "It seems to give thee pleasure," said Lorn, "that he makes such havoc among our friends."—"Not so, by my faith," replied MacNaughton; "but be he friend or foe who achieves high deeds of chivalry, man should bear faithful witness to his valour; and never have I heard of one, who, by his knightly feats, has extricated himself from such danger as have this day surrounded Bruce." "*Studded fair with gems of price.*" Great value was bestowed upon the *fibald*, or brooch, which secured the plaid, when the wearer was a person of importance.

NOTE 16, Page 25.—"*Vain Kirkpatrick's bloody dirk.*"

Every reader must recollect that the proximate cause of Bruce's asserting his right to the crown of Scotland, was the death of John, called the Red Comyn. The causes of this act of violence, equally extraordinary from the high rank both of the perpetrator and sufferer, and from the place where the slaughter was committed, are variously related by the Scottish and English historians, and cannot now be ascertained. The fact that they met at the high altar of the Minorites, or Greyfriars' Church in Dumfries, that their difference broke out into high and insulting language, and that Bruce drew his dagger and stabbed Comyn, is certain. Rushing to the door of the church, Bruce met two powerful barons, Kirkpatrick of Closeburn and James de Lindsay, who eagerly asked him, what tidings? "Bad tidings," answered Bruce; "I doubt I have slain Comyn."—"Doubtest thou?" said Kirkpatrick; "I make sicker," (*i.e.*, sure.) With these words, he and Lindsay rushed into the church, and despatched the wounded Comyn. The Kirkpatricks of Closeburn assumed, in memory of this deed, a hand holding a dagger, with the memorable words, "I make sicker."

NOTE 17, Page 25.—"*Fled the fiery De la Haye.*"

These knights are enumerated by Barbour, among the small number of Bruce's adherents, who remained in arms with him after the battle of Methven. There were more than one of the noble family of Hay engaged in Bruce's cause. But the principal was Gilbert De la Haye, Earl of Errol, a stanch adherent of King Robert's interest, whom he rewarded by creating him hereditary Lord High Constable of Scotland, a title which he used 16th March, 1308, where, in a letter from the peers of Scotland to Philip the Fair of France, he is designated *Gilbertus de Hay Constabularius Scotiæ*. He was slain at the battle of Halidoun-hill. Hugh De la Haye, his brother, was made prisoner at the battle of Methven.

NOTE 18, Page 25.—"*Well hast thou framed, Old Man, thy strains.*"

The character of the Highland bards, however high in our earlier periods of society, seems soon to have degenerated. The Irish affirm, that in their kindred tribes severe laws became necessary to restrain their avarice. In the Highlands they seem gradually to have sunk into contempt, as well as the orators, or men of speech, with whose office that of family poet was often united.

NOTE 19, Page 30.—"*Was't not enough, to Ronald's bower.*"

It was anciently customary in the Highlands to bring the bride to the house of the husband. Nay, in some cases the complaisance was stretched so far, that she remained there upon trial for a twelvemonth; and the bridegroom, even after this period of cohabitation, retained an option of refusing to fulfil his engagement. It

is said that a desperate feud ensued between the clans of MacDonald of Sleate and MacLeod, owing to the former chief having availed himself of this licence to send back to Dunvegan a sister, or daughter of the latter. MacLeod, resenting the indignity, observed, that since there was no wedding bonfire, there should be one to solemnize the divorce. Accordingly, he burned and laid waste the territories of MacDonald, who retaliated, and a deadly feud, with all its accompaniments, took place in form.

NOTE 20, Page 31.—“*Since Matchless Wallace first had been.*”

There is something singularly doubtful about the mode in which Wallace was taken. That he was betrayed to the English is indubitable; and popular fame charges Sir John Menteith with the indelible infamy. “Accursed,” says Arnold Blair, “be the day of nativity of John de Menteith, and may his name be struck out of the book of life.” But John de Menteith was all along a zealous favourer of the English interest, and was governor of Dumbarton Castle by commission from Edward the First; and therefore, as the accurate Lord Hailes has observed, could not be the friend and confidant of Wallace, as tradition states him to be. The truth seems to be, that Menteith, thoroughly engaged in the English interest, pursued Wallace closely, and made him prisoner through the treachery of an attendant, whom Peter Langtoft calls Jack Short.

The infamy of seizing Wallace must, therefore, rest between a degenerate Scottish nobleman, the vassal of England, and a domestic, the obscure agent of his treachery; between Sir John Monteith, son of Walter, Earl of Monteith, and the traitor Jack Short.

Stowe gives the following curious account of the trial and execution of this celebrated patriot:—“William Wallace, who had oft-times set Scotland in great trouble, was taken and brought to London, with great numbers of men and women wondering upon him. He was lodged in the house of William Delect, a citizen of London, in Fenchurch Street. On the morrow, being the eve of St Bartholemew, he was brought on horseback to Westminster, John Legrave and Geoffrey, knights, the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen of London, and many others, both on horseback and on foot, accompanying him; and in the great hall of Westminster, he being placed on the south bench, crowned with laurel, for that he had said in times past, that he ought to wear a crown in that hall, and being appeached for a traitor by Sir Peter Malorie, the king’s justice, he answered—‘That he was never traitor to the King of England;’ but for other things whereof he was accused, he confessed them; and was after headed and quartered.”

NOTE 21, Page 31.—“*Where’s Nigel Bruce?*”

Sir Nigel Bruce was the younger brother of Robert, to whom he committed the charge of his wife and daughter, Marjorie, and the defence of his strong castle of Kildrummie, near the head of the Don, in Aberdeenshire. Kildrummie long resisted the arms of the Earls of Lancaster and Hereford, until the magazine was treacherously burnt. The garrison was then compelled to surrender at discretion, and Nigel Bruce, a youth remarkable for personal beauty, as well as gallantry, fell into the hands of the unrelenting Edward. He was tried by a special commission at Berwick, was condemned, and executed. Christopher Seatoun shared the same unfortunate fate. He also was distinguished by personal valour, and signalised himself in the fatal battle of Methven. Robert Bruce adventured his person in that battle like a knight of romance. He dismounted Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, but was in his turn dismounted by Sir Philip Mowbray. In this emergency Seatoun came to his aid, and remounted him.

NOTE 22, Page 31.—“*Was not the life of Athole shed.*”

John de Strathbogie, Earl of Athole, had attempted to escape out of the kingdom, but a storm cast him upon the coast, when he was taken, sent to London, and executed, with circumstances of great barbarity, being first half strangled, then let down from the gallows while yet alive, barbarously dismembered, and his body burnt. Matthew of Westminster tells us that King Edward, then extremely ill, received great ease from the news that his relative was apprehended—“*Quo audito, Rex Angliæ, etsi gravissimo morbo tunc langueret, levius tamen tulit dolorem.*” To this singular expression the text alludes.

NOTE 23, Page 31.—“*Be nought but quarter, hang, and slay.*”

This alludes to a passage in Barbour, singularly expressive of the vindictive spirit of Edward I. “But his will,” says Barbour, “was always evil towards Scottishmen.”

“Scotos, Edwardus, dum vivit, suppeditavit,
Tenuit, afflixit, depressit, dilaniavit.”

NOTE 24, Page 31.—“*By Woden wild (my grandsire's oath.)*”

The MacLeods, and most other distinguished Hebridean families, were of Scandinavian extraction, and some were late or imperfect converts to Christianity. The family names of Torquil, Thormod, etc., are all Norwegian.

NOTE 25, Page 32.—“*Expels thee from the church's care.*”

So soon as the notice of Comyn's slaughter reached Rome, Bruce and his adherents were excommunicated. It was published first by the Archbishop of York, and renewed at different times, particularly by Lambyrton, Bishop of St Andrews, in 1308; but it does not appear to have answered the purpose which the English monarch expected.

NOTE 26, Page 33.—“*While I the blessed cross advance.*”

Bruce uniformly professed, and probably felt, compunction for having violated the sanctuary of the church by the slaughter of Comyn; and finally, in his last hours, in testimony of his penitence, he requested James, Lord Douglas, to carry his heart to Jerusalem, to be there deposited in the Holy Sepulchre.

NOTE 27, Page 33.—“*De Bruce! I rose with purpose dread.*”

For reasons which it may be difficult to trace, the thunders of Rome descended upon the Scottish mountains with less effect than in more fertile countries. Probably the comparative poverty of the benefices occasioned that fewer foreign clergy settled in Scotland; and the interests of the native churchmen were linked with that of their country. Many of the Scottish prelates, Lambyrton the primate particularly, declared for Bruce, while he was yet under the ban of the church, although he afterwards again changed sides.

NOTE 28, Page 34.—“*A hunted wanderer on the wild.*”

This is not metaphorical. The echoes of Scotland did actually

“——— ring

With the bloodhounds that bayed for her fugitive king.”

A very curious and romantic tale is told by Barbour upon this subject, which may be abridged as follows:—

When Bruce had again got footing in Scotland in the spring of 1306, he continued to be in a very weak and precarious condition, gaining, indeed, occasional advantages, but obliged to fly before his enemies whenever they assembled in force. Upon one occasion, while he was lying with a small party in the wilds of Cumnock, in Ayrshire, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, with his inveterate foe John of Lorn, came against him suddenly with eight hundred Highlanders, besides a large body of men-at-arms. They brought with them a slough-dog, or bloodhound, which, some say, had been once a favourite with the Bruce himself, and therefore was least likely to lose the trace.

Bruce, whose force was under four hundred men, continued to make head against the cavalry, till the men of Lorn had nearly cut off his retreat. Perceiving the danger of his situation, he acted as the celebrated and ill-requited Mina is said to have done in similar circumstances. He divided his force into three parts, appointed a place of rendezvous, and commanded them to retreat by different routes. But when John of Lorn arrived at the spot where they divided, he caused the hound to be put upon the trace, which immediately directed him to the pursuit of that party which Bruce headed. This, therefore, Lorn pursued with his whole force, paying no attention to the others. The king again subdivided his small body into three parts, and with the same result, for the pursuers attached themselves exclusively to that which he led in person. He then caused his followers to disperse, and retained only his foster-brother in his company. The slough-dog followed the trace, and, neglecting the others, attached himself and his attendants to the pursuit of the king. Lorn became convinced that his enemy was nearly in his power, and detached five of his most active attendants to follow him, and interrupt his flight. They did so with all the agility of mountaineers. “What aid wilt thou make?” said Bruce to his single attendant, when he saw the five men gain ground on him. “The best I can,” replied his foster-brother. “Then,” said Bruce, “here I make my stand.” The five pursuers came up fast. The king took three to himself, leaving the other two to his foster-brother. He slew the first who encountered him; but observing his foster-brother hard pressed, he sprung to his assistance, and despatched one of his assailants. Leaving him to deal with the survivor, he returned upon the other two, both of whom he slew, before his foster-brother had despatched his single antagonist.

When this hard encounter was over, with a courtesy which in the whole work marks Bruce's character, he thanked his foster-brother for his aid. "It likes you to say so," answered his follower; "but you yourself slew four of the five."—"True," said the king, "but only because I had better opportunity than you. They were not apprehensive of me when they saw me encounter three, so I had time to spring to thy aid, and to return unexpectedly upon my own opponents."

In the meanwhile Lorn's party approached rapidly, and the king and his foster-brother betook themselves to a neighbouring wood. Here they sat down, for Bruce was exhausted by fatigue, until the cry of the slough-hound came so near that his foster-brother entreated Bruce to provide for his safety by retreating further. "I have heard," said the king, "that if you wade a bowshot length down a running stream, it shall make the slough-hound lose scent. Let us try the experiment; for were yon devilish hound silenced, I should care little for the rest."

Lorn in the meanwhile advanced, and found the bodies of his slain vassals, over whom he made his moan, and threatened the most deadly vengeance. Then he followed the hound to the side of the brook, down which the king had waded a great way. Here the hound was at fault, and John of Lorn, after long attempting in vain to recover Bruce's trace, relinquished the pursuit.

"Others," says Barbour, "affirm, that upon this occasion the king's life was saved by an excellent archer who accompanied him, and who, perceiving they would be finally taken by means of the bloodhound, hid himself in a thicket, and shot him with an arrow. In which way," adds he, "this escape happened, I am uncertain, but at that brook the king escaped from his pursuers."

NOTE 29, Page 36.—"*A pirate sworn was Cormac Doil.*"

A sort of persons common in the isles, as may be easily believed, until the introduction of civil polity. Witness the Dean of the Isles' account of Ronay:—"At the north end of Raarsay, be half-myle of sea frae it, layes one ile callit Ronay, mair than a myle in length, full of woad and heddir, with one havein for heiland galleys in the middis of it; and the same havein is guid for fosterin' of thieves, ruggairs, and reivars, till a nail upon the peilling and spulzeing of poor popill. This ile portains to M'Gillychallan of Raarsay by force, and to the Bischope of the Isles be heritage."

NOTE 30, Page 38.—"*Alas! dear youth, the unhappy time!*"

I have followed the vulgar and inaccurate tradition that Bruce fought against Wallace and the array of Scotland at the fatal field of Falkirk. The account given by most of our historians of the conversation between Bruce and Wallace over the Carron river is equally apocryphal. There is full evidence that Bruce was not at that time on the English side, nor present at the battle of Falkirk; nay, that he acted as a guardian of Scotland along with John Comyn, in the name of Baliol, and in opposition to the English.

NOTE 31, Page 40.—"*The savage wilds that lie.*"

The following account is extracted from a journal kept during a tour through the Scottish islands:—"The western coast of Skye is highly romantic, and at the same time displays a richness of vegetation in the lower grounds to which we have hitherto been strangers. We opened Loch Scavig, and were now in the western termination of the high ridge of mountains called Cuillen, or Quillin, or Coolin, whose weather-beaten and serrated peaks we had admired at a distance from Dunvegan. They look here upon the sea, but with the same bold aspect their distant appearance had indicated. They appeared to consist of precipitous sheets of naked rock, down which the torrents were leaping in a hundred lines of foam. The tops of the ridge, apparently inaccessible to human foot, were rent and split into the most tremendous pinnacles. Arrived at the depth of the bay, we found that the discharge from a second lake forms a sort of waterfall, or rather a rapid stream, which rushes down to the sea with great fury and precipitation. Round this place were assembled hundreds of trouts and salmon, struggling to get up with the fresh water. Advancing up this huddling and riotous brook, we found ourselves in a most extraordinary scene. We lost sight of the sea almost immediately after we had climbed over a low range of crags, and were surrounded by mountains of naked rock, of the boldest and most precipitous character. The ground on which we walked was the margin of a lake, which seemed to have sustained the constant ravage of torrents from these rude neighbours. The shores consisted of huge strata of naked granite, here and there intermixed with bogs, and heaps of gravel and sand piled in the empty water-courses. Vegetation there was little or none, and the mountains rose so perpendicularly from the water edge, that Borrodale or even Glencoe is a jest to them. We proceeded a mile and a half

up this deep, dark, and solitary lake, which was about two miles long, half a mile broad, and is, as we learned, of extreme depth. The murky vapours which enveloped the mountain ridges, obliged us by assuming a thousand varied shapes, changing their drapery into all sort of forms, and sometimes clearing off altogether. It is true, the mist made us pay the penalty by some heavy and downright showers, from the frequency of which, a Highland boy, whom we brought from the farm, told us, the lake was popularly called the water kettle. The proper name is Loch Corriskin, from the deep corrie or hollow in the mountains of Cuillin which affords the basin for this wonderful sheet of water, about two miles long, half a mile broad, and of extreme depth. It is as exquisite a savage scene as Loch Katrine is a scene of romantic beauty—the termination of the lake under one immense precipice, which rises abruptly from the water—ravages which storms must have made in the recesses where all human witnesses were driven to places of more shelter and security. Stones, or rather large masses and fragments of rock of a composite kind, perfectly different from the strata of the lake, were scattered upon the bare rocky beach in the strangest and most precarious situation, as if abandoned by the torrents which had borne them down from above. Some lay loose and tottering upon the ledges of the natural rock with so little security that the slightest push moved them, though their weight might exceed many tons. I never saw a spot in which there was less appearance of vegetation of any kind. Upon the whole, though I have witnessed many scenes of more extensive desolation, I never witnessed any in which it pressed more deeply than at Loch Corriskin, at the same time that its grandeur elevated and redeemed it from the wild and dreary character of utter barrenness.

NOTE 32, Page 44.—“*Men were they all of evil mien.*”

The story of Bruce's meeting with the banditti is copied, with such alterations as the fictitious narrative rendered necessary, from a striking incident in the monarch's history, as told by Barbour.

NOTE 33, Page 49.—“*And mermaid's alabaster grot.*”

Imagination can hardly conceive anything more beautiful than the extraordinary grotto discovered not many years since upon the estate of Alexander MacAllister, Esq., of Strath-Aird. It has since been much and deservedly celebrated, and a full account of its beauties has been published by Dr MacLeay of Oban.

“The first entrance to this celebrated cave is rude and unpromising; but the light of the torches with which we were provided, was soon reflected from the roof, floor, and walls, which seem as if they were sheeted with marble, partly smooth, partly rough with frost-work and rustic ornaments, and partly seeming to be wrought into statuary. The floor forms a steep and difficult ascent, and might be fancifully compared to a sheet of water, which, while it rushed whitening and foaming down a declivity, had been suddenly arrested and consolidated by the spell of an enchanter. Upon attaining the summit of this ascent, the cave opens into a splendid gallery, adorned with the most dazzling crystallizations, and finally descends with rapidity to the brink of a pool, of the most limpid water, about four or five yards broad. There opens beyond this pool a portal arch, formed by two columns of white spar, with beautiful chasing upon the sides, which promises a continuation of the cave. One of our sailors swam across, for there is no other mode of passing, and informed us (as indeed we partly saw by the light he carried), that the enchantment of MacAllister's cave terminates with this portal, a little beyond which there was only a rude cavern, speedily choked with stones and earth. But the pool on the brink of which we stood, surrounded by the most fanciful mouldings, in a substance resembling white marble, and distinguished by the depth and purity of its waters, might have been the bathing grotto of a naiad. The groups of combined figures projecting, or embossed, by which the pool is surrounded, are exquisitely elegant and fanciful.”—Mr MacAllister of Strath-Aird has, with great propriety, built up the exterior entrance to this cave, in order that strangers may enter properly attended by a guide, to prevent any repetition of the wanton and selfish injury which this singular scene has already sustained.

NOTE 34, Page 53.—“*Such hate was his on Solway's strand.*”

To establish his dominion in Scotland had been a favourite object of Edward's ambition, and nothing could exceed the pertinacity with which he pursued it. After the battles of Falkirk and Methven, and the dreadful examples which he had made of Wallace and other champions of national independence, he probably concluded that every chance of insurrection was completely annihilated. This was in 1306, when Bruce, as we have seen, was utterly expelled from Scotland.

Yet, in the conclusion of the same year, Bruce was again in arms and formidable; and in 1307, Edward, though exhausted by a long and wasting malady, put himself at the head of the army destined to destroy him utterly. But even his spirit of vengeance was unable to restore his exhausted strength. He reached Burgh-upon-Sands, a pretty village of Cumberland, on the shores of the Solway Firth, and there, 6th July, 1307, expiring in sight of the detested and devoted country of Scotland. His dying injunction to his son required him to continue the Scottish war. To mark his animosity, the dying monarch ordered his bones to be carried with the invading army, "for he believed verily that if they had his bones with them, that the Scots should never attain any victory against them." Edward's commands were not obeyed, for he was interred in Westminster Abbey, with the appropriate inscription:—"EDWARDUS PRIMUS, SCOTOREM MALLEUS, HIC EST."

NOTE 35, Page 56.—"*Canna's tower, that, steep and grey.*"

The little island of Canna, or Cannay, adjoins to those of Rum and Muick, with which it forms one parish. In a pretty bay opening toward the east there is a lofty and slender rock, detached from the shore. Upon the summit are the ruins of a very small tower, scarcely accessible by a steep and precipitous path. Here, it is said, one of the Kings or Lords of the Isles confined a beautiful lady of whom he was jealous. The ruins are of course haunted by her restless spirit, and many romantic stories are told by the aged people of the island concerning her fate in life, and her appearances after death.

NOTE 36, Page 57.—"*And Ronin's mountains dark have sent.*"

Ronin (popularly called Rum, a name which a poet may be pardoned for avoiding if possible) is a very rough and mountainous island, adjacent to those of Eigg and Cannay. There is almost no arable ground upon it, so that, except in the plenty of the deer, which of course are now nearly extirpated, it still deserves the description bestowed by the Archdean of the Isles:—"Ronin, sixteen myle north-west from the ile of Coll, lyes ane ile callit Ronan Ile, of sixteen myle long, and six in bredthe in the narrowest, ane forest of heigh mountains, and abundance of little deir in it, quhilk deir will never be slane downwith, but the principal saittis man be in the height of the hill, because the deir will be callit upwart ay be the tainchell, or without tynchel they will pass upwart perforce. In this ile will be gotten about Britane als many wild nests upon the plane mure as men pleasis to gadder, and yet by resson the fowls hes few to start them except deir. This ile lyes from the west to the eist in lenth, and pertains to M'Kenabrey of Colla. Many solan geese are in this ile."—MONRO'S WESTERN ISLES, p. 18.

NOTE 37, Page 57.—"*On Scur-Eigg next a warning light.*"

This, and the following lines of the stanza, refers to a dreadful tale of feudal vengeance, of which, unfortunately, there are relics that still attest the truth. Scoor-Eigg is a high peak in the centre of the small Isle of Eigg, or Egg, one of the caverns in which was the scene of a horrid feudal vengeance. This noted cave has a very narrow opening, through which one can hardly creep on his knees and hands. It rises steep and lofty within, and runs into the bowels of the rock to the depth of 255 measured feet; the height at the entrance may be about three feet, but rises within to eighteen or twenty, and the breadth may vary in the same proportion. The rude and stony bottom of this cave is strewn with the bones of men, women, and children, the sad relicts of the ancient inhabitants of the island, 200 in number, who were slain on the following occasion:—The MacDonalds of the Isle of Egg, a people dependent on Clan-Ranald, had done some injury to the laird of MacLeod. The tradition of the isle says, that it was by a personal attack on the chieftain, in which his back was broken. But that of the other isles bears, more probably, that the injury was offered to two or three of the MacLeods, who, landing upon Eigg, and using some freedom with the young women, were seized by the islanders, bound hand and foot, and turned adrift in a boat, which the winds and waves safely conducted to Skye. To avenge the offence given, MacLeod sailed with such a body of men as rendered resistance hopeless. The natives, fearing his vengeance, concealed themselves in this cavern, and, after a strict search, the MacLeods went on board their galleys, after doing what mischief they could, concluding the inhabitants had left the isle, and had betaken themselves to the Long Island, or some of Clan-Ranald's other possessions. But next morning they espied from the vessels a man upon the island, and immediately landing again, they traced his retreat by the marks of his footsteps, a light snow being unhappily on the ground. MacLeod then surrounded the cavern, summoned the subterranean garrison, and demanded that the individuals who had offended him should

be delivered up to him. This was peremptorily refused. The chieftain then caused his people to divert the course of a rill of water, which, falling over the entrance of the cave, would have prevented his purposed vengeance. He then kindled at the entrance of the cavern a huge fire, composed of turf and fern, and maintained it with unrelenting assiduity, until all within were destroyed by suffocation. The date of this dreadful deed must have been recent, if one may judge from the fresh appearance of those relics. I brought off, in spite of the prejudice of our sailors, a skull from among the numerous specimens of mortality which the cavern afforded. Before re-embarking, we visited another cave, opening to the sea, but of a character entirely different, being a large open vault, as high as that of a cathedral, and running back a great way into the rock at the same height. The height and width of the opening gives ample light to the whole. Here, after 1745, when the Catholic priests were scarcely tolerated, the priest of Eigg used to perform the Roman Catholic service, most of the islanders being of that persuasion. A huge ledge of rocks, rising about half-way up one side of the vault, served for altar and pulpit; and the appearance of a priest and Highland congregation in such a place of worship, might have engaged the pencil of Salvator.

NOTE 38, Page 57.—“*That guard famed Staffa round.*”

Staffa—a wonder so often described, and yet so incapable of being understood by description. This palace of Neptune is even grander upon a second than the first view—the stupendous columns which form the sides of the cave, the depth and strength of the side which rolls its deep and heavy swell up to the extremity of the vault—the variety of tints formed by white, crimson, and yellow stalactites or petrifications, which occupy the vacancies between the base of the broken pillars which form the roofs and intersect them with a rich, curious, and variegated chasing, occupying each interstice—the corresponding variety below water, where the ocean rolls over a dark-red or violet-coloured rock, from which, as from a base, the basaltic columns rise—the tremendous noise of the swelling tide, mingling with the deep-toned echoes of the vault—are circumstances elsewhere unparalleled. Nothing can be more interesting than the varied appearance of the little archipelago of islets, of which Staffa is the most remarkable. This group, called in Gaelic Treshnish, affords a thousand views to the voyager, as they appear in different positions with reference to his course. The variety of their shape contributes much to the beauty of these spots.

NOTE 39, Page 59.—“*Then dragged their bark the isthmus o'er.*”

The peninsula of Cantyre is joined to South Knapdale by a very narrow isthmus, formed by the western and eastern Lochs of Tarbet. These two salt water lakes or bays encroach so far upon the land, and their extremities come so near to each other, that there is not above a mile of land to divide them. “It is the opinion of many,” says Pennant, “that these little isthmuses, so frequently called Tarbet, in North Britain, took their name from the circumstance of boats being drawn across them; tarruing, signifying to draw; and bata, a boat.” (*The Crinan Canal, further up Loch Fyne, is the tourist route from Oban to Glasgow.*)

NOTE 40, Page 62.—“*That blast was winded by the king.*”

The passage in Barbour describing the landing of Bruce, and his being recognised by Douglas and those of his followers who preceded him by the sound of his horn, is in the original singularly simple and affecting. The king arrived in Arran with thirty-three small row-boats. He interrogated a female if there had arrived any warlike men of late in that country. “Surely, sir,” she replied, “I can tell you of many who, lately came hither, discomfited the English governor, and blockaded his castle of Brodick. They maintain themselves in a wood at no great distance.” The king, conceiving this must be Douglas and his people, who had lately set forth to try their fortune in Arran, desired the woman to conduct him to the wood. She obeyed. “The king then blew his horn on high.”

NOTE 41, Page 67.—“*A woman in her last distress.*”

This incident, which illustrates so happily the chivalrous generosity of Bruce, is one of the many simple and national traits recorded by Barbour. It occurred during the expedition which Bruce made to Ireland to support the pretensions of his brother Edward to the throne of that kingdom.

NOTE 42, Page 73.—“*Old Brodick's gothic towers were seen.*”

Brodick, or Brothwick, Castle, in the Isle of Arran, is an ancient fortress near an open roadstead called Brodick Bay, and not far distant from a tolerable harbour,

closed in by the island of Lamlash. This important place had been assailed a short time before Bruce's arrival in the island. James, Lord Douglas, who accompanied Bruce to his retreat in Ruchrine, seems, in the spring of 1306, to have tired of his abode there, and set out accordingly, in the phrase of the times, to see what adventure God would send him. Sir Robert Boyd accompanied him, and his knowledge of the locality of Arrin appears to have directed him thither. They landed in the island privately, and appear to have laid an ambush for Sir John Hastings, the English Governor of Brodick, and surprised a considerable supply of arms and provisions, and nearly took the castle itself.

NOTE 43, Page 73.—"*A language most earnest he bore.*"

Barbour, with great simplicity, gives an anecdote, from which it would seem that the vice of profane swearing, afterwards too general among the Scottish nation, was, at this time, confined to military men. As Douglas, after Bruce's return to Scotland, was roving about the mountainous country of Fweddale, near the Water of Laps, he chanced to hear some persons in a farm-house say, *The Devil*. Concluding from this hardy expression that the house contained warlike guests, he immediately assailed it, and had the good fortune to make prisoners Thomas Landolph, afterwards the famous Earl of Argyll, and Alexander Stuart, Lord Bonkle. Both were then in the English interest, and had come into that country with the purpose of driving out Douglas. They afterwards ranked among Bruce's most zealous adherents.

NOTE 44, Page 74.—"*For, seal the rudely signal made.*"

The remarkable circumstance under the false idea that a maternal castle of Turnberry—turn of success which arose so fully narrated by Barbour—

The Castle of Turnberry, or Bruce, in right of his mother. Let in her own right thereof, wife of afterwards Robert I (17th July singular Lord Hailes mentions domains, she became enamoured castle of Turnberry. A few days the relations of either party, as king instantly seized her castle and whole estate. She afterwards atoned by a fine for her feudal delinquency. Little did Alexander foresee that, from this union, the restorer of the Scottish monarchy was to arise."—ANNALS OF SCOTLAND,

NOTE 45, Page 87.—"*The Bruce hath won his father's hall.*"

I have followed the flattering and plausible tradition that the Bruce, after his descent upon the coast of Ayrshire, actually gained possession of his maternal castle. But the tradition is not accurate. The fact is, that he was only strong enough to alarm and drive in the outposts of the English garrison, then commanded, not by Clifford, as assumed in the text, but by Percy, neither was Clifford slain upon this occasion, though he had several skirmishes with Bruce. He fell afterwards in the battle of Bannockburn. Bruce, after alarming the Castle of Turnberry, and surprising some part of the garrison who were quartered without the walls of the fortress, retreated into the mountainous part of Carrick, and there made himself so strong that the English were obliged to evacuate Turnberry, and at length the Castle of Ayr. Many of his benefactions and royal gifts attest his attachment to the hereditary followers of his house in this part of Scotland.

NOTE 46, Page 88.—"*Around old friends, and gather now.*"

As soon as it was known in Kyle, says ancient tradition, that Robert Bruce had landed in Carrick, with the intention of recovering the crown of Scotland, the Laird of Craigue, and forty-eight men in his immediate neighbourhood, declared in favour of their legitimate Prince. Bruce granted them a tract of land, still retained by the freemen of Newton to this day. The original charter was lost when the pestilence was raging at Ayr, but it was renewed by one of the Jameses, and is dated at Faulkland. The freemen of Newton were formerly officers by rotation. The Provost of Ayr, at one time, was a freeman of Newton, and it happened so he his turn, while Provost at Ayr, to be Officer at Newton-upon-Ayr, both of which offices he discharged at the same time.

NOTE 47, Page 88.—“*Let Ettrick's archers sharp their darts.*”

The forest of Selkirk, or Ettrick, at this period occupied all the district which claims that denomination, and embraced the neighbouring dales of Teviotdale, and at the least the Upper Ward of Clydesdale. All that land was probably as waste as it is mountainous, and covered with the remains of the ancient Caledonian forest, which is supposed to have stretched from the Cheviot hills as far as Hamilton, and to have comprehended even a part of Ayrshire. At the fatal battle of Falkirk, Sir John Stuart of Bonkill, brother to the Steward of Scotland, commanded the archers of Selkirk forest, who fell around the dead body of their leader. The English historians have commemorated the tall and stately persons, as well as the unswerving faith of these foresters.

NOTE 48, Page 89.—“*When Bruce's banner had victorious flow'd.*”

The important advantage gained by Bruce, after landing at Turnberry, was over Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, the same by whom he had been defeated near Methven. They met, as has been said, by appointment, at Loudon hill, in the west of Scotland. Pembroke sustained a defeat, and from that time Bruce was at the head of a considerable flying army. Yet he was subsequently obliged to retreat into Aberdeenshire, and was there assailed by Comyn, Earl of Buchan, desirous to avenge the death of his relative, the Red Comyn, and supported by a body of English troops under Philip de Mowbray. Bruce was ill at the time of a scrofulous disorder, but took horse to meet his enemies, although obliged to be supported on either side. He was victorious, and it is said that the agitation of his spirits restored his health.

NOTE 49, Page 89.—“*When English blood oft deluged Douglas-dale.*”

The good Lord James of Douglas, during these commotions, often took from the English his own castle of Douglas, but being unable to garrison it, contented himself with destroying the fortifications and retiring into the mountains. As a reward to his patriotism, it is said to have been prophesied that how often soever Douglas Castle should be destroyed, it should always again arise more magnificent from its ruins. Upon one of these occasions he used fearful cruelty, causing all the store of provisions which the English had laid up in his castle to be heaped together, bursting the wine and beer casks among the wheat and flour, slaughtering the cattle upon the same spot, and upon the top of the whole cutting the throats of the English prisoners. This pleasantry of the “good Lord James” is commemorated under the name of the “*Douglas's Larder.*” A more pleasing tale of chivalry is recorded by Godscroft:—“By this means and such other exploits, he so affrighted the enemy, that it was counted a matter of great jeopardy to keep this castle, which began to be called the adventurous castle of Dangerous (Castle Dangerous); whereupon one John Walton, being in suit of an English lady, she wrote him, that when he had kept the adventurous castle of Douglas seven years, then he might think himself worthy to be a suitor to her. Upon this occasion Walton took upon him the keeping of it, and succeeded to Thruswall, but he ran the same fortune with the rest that were before him. Sir James dressed an ambuscade near the place; the disguised carriers, seeing the captain drawn from the castle, did quickly mount themselves on horseback, and met him with a sharp encounter, being so much the more amazed as it was unlooked for; wherefore when he saw these carriers metamorphised into warriors and ready to assault him, fearing that which was, that there was some train laid for them, he turned about to have retired to his castle, but there he also met with his enemies, between which two companies he and his whole followers were slain. The captain afterwards being searched, they found his mistress's letter about him.”

NOTE 50, Page 89.—“*And fiery Edward routed stout St John.*”

“John de St John, with 1500 horsemen, had advanced to oppose the inroad of the Scots. By a forced march he endeavoured to surprise them, but intelligence of his motions was timeously received. The courage of Edward Bruce, approaching to temerity frequently, enabled him to achieve what men of more judicious valour would never have attempted. He ordered the infantry and the meaner part of his army to entrench themselves in strong narrow ground. He himself, with fifty horsemen well harnessed, issued forth under cover of a thick mist, surprised the English on their march, attacked and dispersed them.”—DALRYMPLE'S ANNALS.

NOTE 51, Page 89.—“*When Randolph's war-cry swell'd the Southern gale.*”

Thomas Randolph, Bruce's sister's son, a renowned Scottish chief, was, in the early part of his life, not more remarkable for consistency than Bruce himself. He espoused his uncle's party when Bruce first assumed the crown, and was made prisoner at the fatal battle of Methven, in which his relations' hopes appeared to be ruined. Randolph accordingly not only submitted to the English, but took an active part against Bruce, appeared in arms against him, and in the skirmish where he was so closely pursued by the bloodhound, it is said his nephew took his standard with his own hand. But Randolph was afterwards made prisoner by Douglas, in Tweeddale, and brought before King Robert. Some harsh language was exchanged between the uncle and nephew, and the latter was committed for a time to close custody. Afterwards, however, they were reconciled, and Randolph was created Earl of Moray, about 1312. After this he distinguished himself; first, by the surprise of Edinburgh Castle, and afterwards by many enterprises, conducted with equal courage and ability.

NOTE 52, Page 90.—“*Stirling's towers.*”

When a long train of success, actively improved by Robert Bruce, had made him master of almost all Scotland, Stirling Castle continued to hold out. The care of the blockade was committed by the King to his brother Edward, who concluded a treaty with Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor, that he should surrender the fortress, if it were not succoured by the King of England before St John the Baptist's Day. The King severely blamed his brother for the impolicy of a treaty which gave time to the King of England to advance to the relief of the castle with all his assembled forces, and obliged himself either to meet them in battle with an inferior force or to retreat with dishonour. “Let all England come,” answered the reckless Edward; “we will fight them, were they more.” The consequence was, of course, that each kingdom mustered its strength for the expected battle, and as the space agreed upon reached from Lent to Midsummer, full time was allowed for that purpose.

NOTE 53, Page 90.—“*To summon prince and peer.*”

There is printed in *Rymer's Fædera*, the summons issued to the Sheriff of York. The writ states:—“We have understood that our Scottish enemies and rebels are endeavouring to collect as strong a force as possible of infantry, in strong and marshy grounds, where the approach of cavalry would be difficult, between us and the Castle of Stirling.” It sets forth the king's determination, and with divine grace, to raise the siege, and “to remove our said enemies and rebels from such places as above-mentioned, it is necessary for us to have a strong force of infantry fit for arms.” The Sheriff of York is commanded to equip and send forth a body of four thousand infantry.

NOTE 54, Page 90.—“*And Cambria, but of late subdued.*”

Edward the First, with the usual policy of a conqueror, employed the Welsh, whom he had subdued, to assist him in his Scottish wars, for which their habits as mountaineers particularly fitted them. But this policy was not without its risks. Previous to the battle of Falkirk the Welsh quarrelled with the English men-at-arms, and after bloodshed on both sides, separated themselves from his army, and the feud between them, at so dangerous and critical a juncture, was reconciled with difficulty. Edward the Second followed his father's example in this particular, and with no better success. They could not be brought to exert themselves in his cause. But they had an indifferent reward for their forbearance. Without arms, and clad only in scanty dresses of linen cloth, they appeared naked in the eyes even of the Scottish peasantry; and after the rout of Bannockburn, were massacred by them in great numbers as they retired in confusion towards their own country. They were under command of Sir Maurice de Berkeley.

NOTE 55, Page 90.—“*And Connought pour'd from waste and wood.*”

There is in the *Fædera* an invitation to Eth O'Connor, chief of the Irish of Connought, setting forth that the king was about to march against his Scottish rebels, and therefore requesting the attendance of all the forces he could muster, either commanded by himself in person, or by some nobleman of his race. These auxiliaries were to be commanded by Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster.

NOTE 56, Page 93.—“*Their Chief, Fitz-Louis.*”

Fitz-Louis, or Mac Louis, otherwise called Fullarton, is a family of ancient descent in the Isle of Arran. They are said to be of French origin, as the name intimates. They attached themselves to Bruce upon his first landing; and Fergus Mac Louis, or Fullarton, received from the grateful monarch a charter, dated 26th November, in the second year of his reign (1307), for the lands of Kilmichael and others, which still remain in this very ancient and honourable family.

NOTE 57, Page 93.—“*In battles four beneath their eye.*”

Two days before the battle Bruce selected the field of action, and took post there with his army, consisting of about 30,000 disciplined men, and about half the number of disorderly attendants upon the camp. The ground was called the New Park of Stirling; it was partly open and partly broken by copses of wood and marshy ground. He divided his regular force into four divisions. Three of these occupied a front line, separated from each other, yet sufficiently near for purposes of communication. The fourth division formed a reserve. The line extended in a north-easterly direction from the brook of Bannock, which is so broken and rugged as to cover the right flank effectually, to the village of St Ninians, probably in the line of the present road from Stirling to Kilsyth. Edward Bruce commanded the right wing, which was strengthened by a small body of cavalry under Keith, the marshal of Scotland, to whom was committed the important charge of attacking the English archers; Douglas and the young Steward of Scotland led the central wing; and Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, the left wing. The king himself commanded the fourth division, which lay in reserve behind the others. The royal standard was pitched, according to tradition, in a stone having a round hole for its reception, and thence called the Bore Stone. It is still shown on a small eminence called Brock's Brae, to the south-west of St Ninian's. His main body thus disposed, King Robert sent the followers of his camp, fifteen thousand and upwards in number, to the eminence in rear of his army, called from that circumstance the *Gillies' (i.e., servants') Hill*.

The ground in front of Bruce's line of battle being part of a park or chase, it was considerably interrupted with trees, and an extensive marsh, still visible, in some places, rendered it inaccessible, and, in all, difficult of approach. More to the northward, where natural impediments were fewer, Bruce fortified his position against cavalry by digging a number of pits, so close together, says Barbour, as to resemble the cells in a honeycomb. They were a foot in breadth, and between two and three deep, many rows of them being placed one behind the other. They were covered with brushwood and green sods, so as not to be obvious to an impetuous enemy. All the Scottish army were on foot, excepting a select body of cavalry stationed with Sir Edward Bruce on the right wing, under the immediate command of Sir Robert Keith, the marshal of Scotland, who were destined for the important service of charging and dispersing the English archers.

NOTE 58, Page 94.—“*Beyond, the Southern host appears.*”

Upon the 23d June, 1314, the alarm warned the Scottish army of the approach of the enemy. Douglas and the Marshal were sent to reconnoitre with a body of cavalry. The two Scottish commanders were cautious in the account they brought back to the camp. To the king in private they told the formidable state of the enemy; but in public reported that the English were indeed a numerous host, but ill commanded and worse disciplined.

NOTE 59, Page 94.—“*With these, the valiant of the Isles.*”

The men of Argyle, the Islanders, and the Highlanders in general, were ranked in the rear. They must have been numerous, for Bruce had reconciled himself with almost all their chieftains, excepting the obnoxious MacDougals of Lorn. The deed, containing the submission of the potent Earl of Ross to the king, and dated in the third year of Robert's reign, that is 1309, is a curious and valuable document, and throws light on the history of the country.

NOTE 60, Page 95.—“*The Monarch rode along the van.*”

The English vanguard, commanded by the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford, came in sight of the Scottish army, upon the evening of the 23d of June. Bruce was then riding upon a little palfrey, in front of his foremost line, putting his host in order. It was then that the personal encounter took place betwixt him and Sir Henry de Bohun, a gallant English knight, the issue of which had a great effect upon the spirits of both armies; and the incident is graphically told in the pages of

BARBOUR'S BRUCE, vol. ii., p. 122. The Scottish leaders remonstrated with the king upon his temerity. He only answered, "I have broken my good battle-axe." The English vanguard retreated after witnessing this single combat. Probably their generals did not think it advisable to hazard an attack, while its unfavourable issue remained upon their minds.

NOTE 61, Page 98.—"*What train of dust, with trumpet sound.*"

While the van of the English army advanced, a detached body attempted to relieve Stirling. The manœuvre and its results was accompanied by circumstances so highly characteristic of the chivalrous manners of the age, displaying that generosity which reconciles us even to their ferocity upon other occasions. Bruce had enjoined Randolph, who commanded the left wing of his army, to be vigilant in preventing any advanced parties of the English from throwing succours into the Castle of Stirling. As told by Lord Hailes, eight hundred horsemen, commanded by Sir Robert Clifford, were detached from the English army; they made a circuit by the low grounds to the west, and approached the castle. The King perceived their motions, and, coming up to Randolph, angrily exclaimed, "Thoughtless man! you have suffered the enemy to pass." Randolph hastened to repair his fault or perish. Randolph drew up his troops in a circular form, with their spears resting on the ground, and protruded on every side. At the first onset Sir William Daynecourt, an English commander of note, was slain. The enemy, far superior in numbers to Randolph, environed him, and pressed hard on his little band. Douglas saw his jeopardy, and requested the King's permission to go and succour him. "You shall not move from your ground," cried the King; "let Randolph extricate himself as he best may. I will not alter my line of battle, and lose the advantage of my position." "In truth," replied Douglas, "I cannot stand by and see Randolph perish; and, therefore, with your leave, I must aid him." The King unwillingly consented, and Douglas flew to the assistance of his friend. While approaching, he perceived that the English were falling into disorder, and that the perseverance of Randolph had prevailed over their impetuous courage. "Halt," cried Douglas; "those brave men have repulsed the enemy; let us not diminish their glory by sharing it."

NOTE 62, Page 100.—"*Pipe-clang, and bugle-sound were toss'd.*"

There is an old tradition, that the well-known Scottish tune of "Hey, tuitti, tuitti," was Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. Ritson quotes Froissart's account of each soldier in the host bearing a little horn, on which, at the onset, they would make such a horrible noise, as if all the devils of hell had been among them. The tradition, true or false, has been the means of securing to Scotland one of the finest lyrics in the language, the celebrated war-song of Burns—

"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled."

NOTE 63, Page 100.—"*The countless ranks of England drew.*"

Upon the 24th of June, the English army advanced to the attack. The narrowness of the Scottish front, and the nature of the ground, did not permit them to have the full advantage of their numbers, nor is it very easy to find out what was their proposed order of battle. The vanguard, however, appeared a distinct body, consisting of archers and spearsmen on foot, and commanded by the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford. Barbour mentions that they formed nine *battles*, or divisions; but there was no space for them to extend themselves, so that, except the vanguard, the whole army appeared to form one solid and compact body.

NOTE 64, Page 100.—"*See where yon bare-foot Abbot stands.*"

Maurice, Abbot of Inchaffray, placing himself on an eminence, celebrated mass in sight of the Scottish army. He then passed along the front bare-footed, and bearing a crucifix in his hands, and exhorting the Scots, in few and forcible words, to combat for their rights and their liberty. The Scots kneeled down. "They yield," cried Edward; "see, they implore mercy!" "They do," answered Ingleram de Umfraville, "but not ours. On that field they will be victorious or die."—ANNALS OF SCOTLAND, Vol. II., p. 47.

NOTE 65, Page 101.—"*Forth, Marshal! on the peasant foe.*"

The English archers commenced the attack with their usual bravery and dexterity. But against a force, whose importance he had learned by fatal experience, Bruce was provided. A small but select body of cavalry were detached from the right,

under the command of Sir Robert Keith. They rounded, as I conceive, the marsh called Milntown bog, and, keeping the firm ground, charged the left flank and the rear of the English archers. As the bowmen had no spears, nor long weapons, fit to defend themselves against horse, they were instantly driven into disorder, and spread through the whole English army a confusion from which they never fairly recovered.

NOTE 66, Page 105.—“*Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee.*”

When the engagement between the main bodies had lasted some time, Bruce made a decisive movement, by bringing up the Scottish reserve. Tradition affirms that at this crisis, he addressed the Lord of the Isles, in a phrase used as a motto by some of his descendants, “My trust is constant in thee.”

NOTE 67, Page 106.—“*And mimic ensigns high they rear.*”

The followers of the Scottish camp observed, from the Gillies hill in the rear, the impression produced upon the English army by the bringing up of the Scottish reserve, and, prompted by the intense awe of the moment, or the desire of plunder, assumed, in a tumultuous manner, such arms as they found nearest, fastened sheets to tent-poles and lances, and showed themselves like a new army riding to battle. The unexpected apparition, of what seemed a new army, completed the confusion which already prevailed among the English, who fled in every direction, and were pursued with immense slaughter. The brook of Bannock, according to Barbour, was so choked with the bodies of men and horses, that it might have been passed dry-shod. The followers of the Scottish camp fell upon the disheartened fugitives, and added to the confusion and slaughter. Many were driven into the Forth and perished there. About a short mile from the field of battle is a place called the Bloody-faulds. Here the Earl of Gloucester is said to have made a stand, and died gallantly at the head of his own military-tenants, and vassals. He was much regretted by both sides. Sir Marmaduke Twenge, an English knight, contrived to conceal himself during the press of the pursuit, and, when it was somewhat slackened, approached King Robert. “Whose prisoner are you, Sir Marmaduke?” said Bruce, to whom he was personally known. “Yours, sir,” answered the knight. “I receive you,” answered the king; and, treating him with the utmost courtesy, loaded him with gifts, and dismissed him without ransom.

NOTE 68, Page 106.—“*O give their hapless Prince his due.*”

Edward II. showed, in the fatal field of Bannockburn, personal gallantry not unworthy of his great sire and greater son. He remained in the field till forced away by the Earl of Pembroke when all was lost. He then rode to the Castle of Stirling, and demanded admittance; but the governor remonstrated upon the imprudence of shutting himself up in that fortress, which must so soon surrender. He assembled around him five hundred men-at-arms, and, avoiding the field of battle and the victorious army, fled towards Linlithgow, pursued by Douglas with about sixty horse. They were augmented by Sir Lawrence Abernethy with seventy more, whom Douglas met in the Torwood upon their way to join the English army, and whom he easily persuaded to desert the defeated monarch, and to assist in the pursuit. Edward's flight terminated at Dunbar, where the Earl of March, who still professed allegiance to him, “received him full gustly.” From thence he escaped to Bambourgh in a fishing vessel.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

"If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight,
For the gay beams of lightsome day,
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey."

THE
LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

A Poem.

IN SIX CANTOS.

*Dum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque, qui feci, iudice, digna lini.*

WITH NOTES.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Poem now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the ancient metrical romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorises the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied in the action is Three Nights and Three Days.

The Lay of the Last Minstrel.



INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses grey,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door.
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh:
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,

Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
 Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
 But never closed the iron door
 Against the desolate and poor.
 The Duchess* mark'd his weary pace,
 His timid mien, and reverend face,
 And bade her page the menials tell
 That they should tend the old man well:
 For she had known adversity,
 Though born in such a high degree;
 In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
 Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
 And the old man was gratified,
 Began to rise his minstrel pride;
 And he began to talk anon,
 Of good Earl Francis,† dead and gone,
 And of Earl Walter,‡ rest him, God!
 A braver ne'er to battle rode;
 And how full many a tale he knew,
 Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
 And, would the noble Duchess deign
 To listen to an old man's strain,
 Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
 He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
 That, if she loved the harp to hear,
 He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
 The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
 But, when he reach'd the room of state,
 Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
 Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
 For, when to tune his harp he tried,
 His trembling hand had lost the ease,
 Which marks security to please;
 And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
 Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
 He tried to tune his harp in vain!
 The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
 And gave him heart, and gave him time

* Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, widow of James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

† Francis Scott, of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess.

‡ Walter, of Buccleuch, grandfather of the Duchess.

Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never **thought to sing again.**
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his finger stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied:
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the **LATEST MINSTREL** sung.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,¹
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame²
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of metal true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They carv'd at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet
barr'd.

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
 Waited the beck of the warders ten;
 Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
 Stood saddled in stable day and night,
 Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
 And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow;³
 A hundred more fed free in stall:—
 Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
 Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night?
 They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying:
 They watch, to hear the war-horn braying:
 To see St George's red cross streaming,
 To see the midnight beacon gleaming:
 They watch, against Southern force and guile,⁴
 Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
 Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
 From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall.—
 Many a violent knight is here;
 But he, the chieftain of them all,
 His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
 Beside his broken spear.
 Bards long shall tell,
 How Lord Walter fell!⁵
 When startled burghers fled, afar,
 The furies of the Border war;
 When the streets of high Dunedin*
 Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
 And heard the slogan's† deadly yell—
 Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
 Or staunch the death-feud's enmity?
 Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
 Can love of blessed charity?
 No! vainly to each holy shrine,⁶
 In mutual pilgrimage they drew;
 Implored, in vain, the grace divine
 For chiefs, their own red falchions slew:

* Edinburgh.

† The war-cry of the Border clan.

While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,⁷
 While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
 The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
 The havoc of the feudal war.
 Shall never, never be forgot!

IX.

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
 The warlike foresters had bent;
 And many a flower, and many a tear,
 Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:
 But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
 The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
 Vengeance deep-brooding o'er the slain,
 Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
 And burning pride and high disdain,
 Forbade the rising tear to flow;
 Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
 Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
 "And if I live to be a man,
 My father's death revenged shall be!"
 Then fast the mother's tears did seek
 To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
 All loose her golden hair,
 Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
 And wept in wild despair,
 But not alone the bitter tear
 Had filial grief supplied;
 For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
 Had lent their mingled tide:
 Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
 Dared she to look for sympathy.
 Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
 With Carr in arms had stood,
 When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran
 All purple with their blood;
 And well she knew, her mother dread,
 Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,⁸
 Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came,
 Her father was a clerk of fame,
 Of Bethune's line of Picardie:⁹

He learned the art that none may name,
 In Padua, far beyond the sea.¹⁰
 Men said, he changed his mortal frame.
 By feat of magic mystery;
 For when in studious mood he paced
 St Andrew's cloister'd hall,
 His form no darkening shadow traced¹¹
 Upon the sunny wall!

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
 He taught that Ladye fair,
 Till to her bidding she could bow
 The viewless forms of air.¹²
 And now she sits in secret bower,
 In old Lord David's western tower,
 And listens to a heavy sound,
 That moans the mossy turrets round,
 Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
 That chafes against the scaur's * red side?
 Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
 Is it the echo from the rocks?
 What may it be, the heavy sound,
 That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
 The ban-dogs bay and howl;
 And from the turrets round,
 Loud whoops the startled owl.
 In the hall, both squire and knight
 Swore that a storm was near,
 And looked forth to view the night;
 But the night was still and clear.

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
 Chafing with the mountain's side,
 From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
 From the sullen echo of the rock,
 From the voice of the coming storm,
 The Ladye knew it well!
 It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
 And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

* A precipitous bank of earth.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

—“ Brother, nay—

On my hills the moonbeams play,
 From Craik-cross to Skelfhill pen,
 By every rill, in every glen,
 Merry elves their morris pacing,
 To ærial minstrelsy,
 Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
 Trip it deft and merrily.
 Up, and mark their nimble feet!
 Up, and list their music sweet!”

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

“Tears of an imprisoned maiden
 Mix with my polluted stream;
 Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
 Mourns beneath the moon’s pale beam.
 Tell me, thou, who view’st the stars,
 When shall cease these feudal jars?
 What shall be the maiden’s fate?
 Who shall be the maiden’s mate?”

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

“ Arthur’s slow wain his course doth roll,
 In utter darkness, round the pole;
 The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
 Orion’s studded belt is dim;
 Twinkling faint, and distant far,
 Shimmers through mist each planet star;
 Ill may I read their high decree!
 But no kind influence deign they shower
 On Teviot’s tide, and Branksome’s tower,
 Till pride be quell’d, and love be free.”

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,
 And the heavy sound was still;
 It died on the river’s breast,
 It died on the side of the hill.
 But round Lord David’s tower
 The sound still floated near;
 For it rung in the Ladye’s bower,
 And it rung in the Ladye’s ear.
 She raised her stately head,
 And her heart throbb’d high with pride;—
 “Your mountains shall bend,
 And your streams ascend,
 Ere Margaret be our foeman’s bride!”

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
 Where many a bold retainer lay,
 And, with jocund din, among them all,
 Her son pursued his infant play.
 A fancied moss-trooper, the boy¹³
 The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
 And round the hall right merrily,
 In mimic foray* rode.
 Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
 Share in his frolic gambols bore,
 Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
 Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
 For the grey warriors prophesied,
 How the brave boy in future war,¹⁴
 Should tame the unicorn's pride,
 Exalt the Crescent and the Star.†

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
 One moment, and no more;
 One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
 As she paused at the arched door:
 Then, from amid the armed train,
 She call'd to her William of Deloraine.¹⁵

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
 As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;
 Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
 Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
 By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
 Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;¹⁶
 In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,
 But he would ride them, one by one;
 Alike to him was time or tide,
 December's snow, or July's pride;
 Alike to him was tide or time,
 Moonless midnight, or matin prime.
 Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
 As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
 Five times outlawed had he been,
 By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII.

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
 Mount thee on the wightest steed;
 Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
 Until thou come to fair Tweedside;

* *Foray*, a predatory inroad. † The armorial bearings of the Scott, and Carr.

And in Melrose's holy pile
 Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
 Greet the Father well from me;
 Say that the fated hour is come,
 And to-night he shall watch with thee,
 To win the treasure of the tomb:
 For this will be St. Michael's night,
 And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
 And the Cross, of bloody red,
 Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep,
 Stay not thou for food or sleep:
 Be it scroll, or be it book,
 Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
 If thou readest, thou art lorn!
 Better hadst thou ne'er been born!"

XXIV.

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
 Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
 Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
 "Again will I be here:
 And safer by none may thy errand be done,
 Than, noble dame, by me;
 Letter nor line know I never a one,
 Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."*

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
 And soon the steep descent he past,
 Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,[†]
 And soon the Teviot side he won.
 Eastward the wooded path he rode,
 Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
 He pass'd the Peel[‡] of Goldiland,
 And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand.
 Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,¹⁷
 Where Druid shades still flitted round;
 In Hawick twinkled many a light;
 Behind him soon they set in night;
 And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
 Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.¹⁸

* *Hairibee*, the place of executing the Border marauders at Carlisle. The neck-verse is the beginning of the 51st Psalm, *miserere mei*, &c., anciently read by criminals claiming the benefit of the clergy.

† *Barbican*, the defence of an outer gate of a feudal castle.

‡ *Peel*, a Border tower.

XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark:—
 “Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark.”—
 “For Branksome, ho!” the knight rejoin’d,
 And left the friendly tower behind.
 He turn’d him now from Teviotside,
 And guided by the tinkling rill,
 Northward the dark ascent did ride,
 And gained the moor at Horsliehill;
 Broad on the left before him lay,
 For many a mile, the Roman way.*

XXVII.

A moment now he slack’d his speed,
 A moment breathed his panting steed;
 Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
 And loosen’d in the sheath his brand.
 On Minto-crag the moonbeams glint,¹⁹
 Where Barnhill hew’d his bed of flint;
 Who flung his outlaw’d limbs to rest,
 Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
 Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
 For many a league his prey could spy
 Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
 The terrors of the robber’s horn;
 Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
 The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
 When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
 Ambition is no cure for love!

XXVIII.

Unchallenged, thence pass’d Deloraine,
 To ancient Riddel’s fair domain,²⁰
 Where Aill, from mountains freed.
 Down from the lakes did raving come;
 Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
 Like the mane of a chesnut steed.
 In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
 Might bar the bold moss-trooper’s road.

XXIX.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
 And the water broke o’er the saddle-bow;
 Above the foaming tide, I ween,
 Scarce half the charger’s neck was seen;
 For he was barded† from counter to tail,
 And the rider was armed complete in mail;

* Crossing through part of Roxburghshire.

† Barded, or barbed,—applied to a horse accoutred with defensive armour.

Never heavier man and horse
 Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
 The warrior's very plume, I say,
 Was draggled by the dashing spray,
 Yet, through good heart, and our Ladye's grace,
 At length he gained the landing place.

XXX.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
 And sternly shook his plumed head,
 As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;²¹
 For on his soul the slaughter red
 Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
 When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
 When royal James beheld the fray,
 Prize to the victor of the day,
 When Home and Douglas, in the van,
 Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
 Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
 Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
 And soon the hated heath was past;
 And far beneath, in lustre wan,
 Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran,²²
 Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
 Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
 When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
 Now midnight lauds* were in Melrose sung.
 The sound, upon the fitful gale,
 In solemn wise did rise and fail,
 Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
 Is waken'd by the winds alone.
 But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
 He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
 And sought the convent's lonely wall.

Here paused the harp; and with its swell
 The Master's fire and courage fell;
 Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
 And, gazing timid on the crowd,
 He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
 If they approved his minstrelsy;

* *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Catholics,

And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age, and wand'ring long,
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they longed the rest to hear,
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day,
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;²³
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St David's ruin'd pile;²⁴
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there:
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair;
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
“Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?”

"From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
 And straight the wicket open'd wide:
 For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood,
 To fence the rights of fair Melrose;
 And lands and livings many a rood,
 Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.²⁵

III.

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
 The porter bent his humble head:
 With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
 And noiseless step, the path he trod;
 The arched cloister, far and wide,
 Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
 Till, stooping low, his lofty crest,
 He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,
 And lifted his barred aventayle,*
 To hail the Monk of St Mary's aisle.

IV.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
 Says, that the fated hour is come,
 And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
 To win the treasure of the tomb."
 From sackcloth couch the monk arose,
 With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd;
 A hundred years had flung their snows
 On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

And strangely on the knight look'd he,
 And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide;
 "And darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
 What heaven and hell alike would hide?
 My breast, in belt of iron pent,
 With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
 For threescore years, in penance spent,
 My knees those flinty stones have worn;
 Yet all too little to atone
 For knowing what should ne'er be known.
 Would'st thou thy every future year
 In ceaseless prayer and penance dree,
 Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
 Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"

VI.

"Penance, father, will I none;
 Prayer know I hardly one;²⁶

* *Aventayle*, visor of the helmet.

For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."

VII.

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy,
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high;
Now slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay;
The pillar'd arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.²⁷

VIII.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glisten'd with the dew of night;
Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start;
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They entered now the chancel tall;
The darken'd roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small:
The key-stone that locked each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quarte-feuille;
The corbells* were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourish'd around,
Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

* *Corbells*, the projections whence the arches spring, usually cut in a fantastic face or mask.

X.

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
 Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
 Around the screened altar's pale;
 And there the dying lamps did burn,
 Before thy low and lonely urn,
 O gallant chief of Otterburne!²⁸
 And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!²⁹
 O fading honours of the dead!
 O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone³⁰
 Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
 By foliated tracery combined;
 Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand
 'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
 In many a freakish knot, had twined;
 Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
 And changed the willow wreathes to stone,
 The silver light, so pale and faint,
 Show'd many a prophet, and many a saint,
 Whose image on the glass was dyed;
 Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
 Triumphant Michael brandished,
 And trampled the Apostate's pride.
 The moonbeam kiss'd the holy pane,
 And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII.

They sate them down on a marble stone,
 (A Scottish monarch slept below;)³¹
 Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:
 "I was not always a man of woe;
 For Paynim countries I have trod,
 And fought beneath the cross of God;
 Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
 And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII.

"In these far climes it was my lot
 To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;³²
 A Wizard, of such dreaded fame,
 That when, in Salamanca's cave,³³
 Him listed his magic wand to wave,
 The bells would ring in Notre Dame!³⁴
 Some of his skill he taught to me;
 And, Warrior, I could say to thee
 The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,³⁵

And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone.
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

XIV.

"When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened:
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed,
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV.

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look:
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St Michael's night,
When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright.
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

XVI.

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid!
Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,
The banners waved without a blast,"—
—Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chill'd with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII.

"Lo, Warrior! now the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night,
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,⁸⁸
Until the eternal doom shall be."—

Slow moved the Monk to the broad flagstone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron-bar the Warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign with his wither'd hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII.

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously.
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

XIX.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee:
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiend had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX.

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe;
Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw,

Bewilder'd and unnerv'd he stood,
And the priest pray'd fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI.

And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:—
"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"
Then, Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd;⁸⁷
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom:
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to-day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII.

"Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
"And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done?"
The Monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
When the convent met at the noontide bell—
The Monk of St Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd,

XXIV.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
 And strove his hardihood to find:
 He was glad when he pass'd the tomb-stones grey,
 Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
 For the mystic Book to his bosom prest,
 Felt like a load upon his breast;
 And his joints with nerves of iron twin'd,
 Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
 Full fain was he when the dawn of day,
 Began to brighten Cheviot grey;
 He joy'd to see the cheerful light,
 And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

XXV.

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,
 The sun had brighten'd the Carter's * side;
 And soon beneath the rising day
 Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
 The wild birds told their warbling tale,
 And waken'd every flower that blows;
 And peeped forth the violet pale,
 And spread her breast the mountain rose.
 And lovelier than the rose so red,
 Yet paler than the violet pale,
 She early left her sleepless bed,
 The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
 And don her kirtle so hastily; [make,
 And the silken knots which in hurry she would
 Why tremble her slender fingers to tie;
 Why does she stop, and look often around,
 As she glides down the secret stair;
 And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
 As she rouses him up from his lair;
 And, though she passes the postern alone,
 Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII.

The Ladye steps in doubt and dread,
 Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
 The Ladye caresses the rough blood-hound,
 Lest his voice should waken the castle round:
 The watchman's bugle is not blown,
 For he was her foster-father's son;

* A mountain on the Borders of Jedburgh,

And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of
light.

To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII.

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall;
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon prest;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare.

XXIX.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy;
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow:
Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
Of two true lovers in a dale;
And how the night with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove;
Swore he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blush'd and how she sigh'd,
And, half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid;—
Yet, might the bloody fued be stay'd,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be,

XXX.

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:
My hairs are grey, my limbs are old,
My heart is dead my veins are cold:
I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI.

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,^{as}

And held his crested helm and spear;
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border, far and near.
'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trode,
He heard a voice cry "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
A leap, of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd,
'Tis said that five long miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII.

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
This elfish Dwarf with the Baron stayed:
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock:
And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
And often mutter'd "Lost! lost! lost!"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
But well Lord Cranstoun served he;
And he of his service was full fain;
For once he had been ta'en or slain;
An' it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage,
Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIII.

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elfish Page,
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes:
For there, beside our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd a band,²⁰
Of the best that would ride at her command:
The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.

They came to St Mary's lake ere day;
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
They burn'd the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIV.

And now, in Branksome's good greenwood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly:
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel-grove,
Flew like the startled cushat-dove: *
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

WHILE thus he pour'd the lengthen'd tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail:
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the wither'd hand of age
A goblet, crown'd with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
Pray'd God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheer'd a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaff'd;
And he, embolden'd by the draught,
Look'd gaily back to them, and laugh'd.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swell'd his old veins, and cheer'd his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

* Wood-pigeon.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

AND said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly fire was fled,
And my poor wither'd heart was dead,
And that I might not sing of love?—
How could I, to the dearest theme
That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream,
So foul, so false a recreant prove!
How could I name love's very name,
Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war he mounts the warrior's steed;
In hall, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
But the Page shouted wild and shrill,
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill
A stately knight came pricking on.
That warrior's steed, so dapple-grey,
Was dark with sweat, and splash'd with clay;
His armour red with many a stain:
He seem'd in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the live-long night; .
For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He mark'd the crane on the Baron's crest;⁴⁰
For his ready spear was in his rest.

Few were the words, and stern and high,
That marked the foeman's feudal hate;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seem'd to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire when wheel'd around,
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V.

In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a prayer;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his Ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sighed nor pray'd,
Nor saint, nor Ladye, call'd to aid;
But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd his spear,
And spurr'd his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
The stately Baron backwards bent;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on the gale:
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,
Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
Still sate the warrior, saddle-fast,
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course;
Nor knew—so giddy roll'd his brain—
His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

VII.

But when he rein'd his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to staunch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,
And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.

This shalt thou do without delay:
Nor longer here myself may stay;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift will be at my dying day.

VIII.

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
The Goblin-Page behind abode;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corslet off he took,
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride:⁴¹
He thought not to search or stanch the wound
Until the secret he had found.

IX.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp:
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read,
It had much of glamour* might,⁴²
Could make a Ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling† seem a palace large
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth.

X.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"—
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry;

* Magical delusion.

† A shepherd's hut.

The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak.—
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive;
It was not given by man alive.

XI.

Unwillingly himself he address'd
To do his master's high behest;
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse;
And led him into Branksome Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all;
And each did after swear and say,
There only pass'd a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye,*
Was always done maliciously;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

XII.

As he repass'd the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport:
He thought to train him to the wood;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook;
The running stream dissolved the spell,⁴⁸
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen;
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;

* Magic.

So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"—

XIV.

Full sore amaz'd at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face,
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouth'd bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher:
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
But still in act to spring;
When dash'd an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
He drew his tough bow-string;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward—"Tis a boy!"

XVI.

The speaker issued from the wood,
And check'd his fellow's surly mood,

And quell'd the ban-dog's ire:
 He was an English yeoman good,
 And born in Lancashire.
 Well could he hit a fallow-deer
 Five hundred feet him fro;
 With hand more true, and eye more clear,
 No archer bended bow.
 His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
 Set off his sun-burn'd face:
 Old England's sign, St George's Cross,
 His barret-cap did grace;
 His bugle-horn hung by his side,
 All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
 And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
 Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
 Reach'd scanty to his knee;
 And, at his belt, of arrows keen
 A furbish'd sheaf bore he:
 His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,"
 No larger fence had he;
 He never counted him a man,
 Would strike below the knee;
 His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
 And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

XVIII.

He would not do the fair child harm,
 But held him with his powerful arm,
 That he might neither fight nor flee;
 For when the Red Cross spied he,
 The boy strove long and violently.
 "Now, by St George," the archer cries,
 "Edward, methinks we have a prize!
 This boy's fair face, and courage free,
 Show he is come of high degree."—

XIX.

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
 For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
 And, if thou dost not set me free,
 False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
 For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
 And William of Deloraine, good at need,
 And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed;
 And, if thou dost not let me go,
 Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
 I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow!"—

XX.

“Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy!
 My mind was never set so high;
 But if thou art chief of such a clan,
 And art the son of such a man,
 And ever comest to thy command,
 Our wardens had need to keep good order;
 My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
 Thou’lt make them work upon the border.
 Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
 For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
 I think our work is well begun.
 When we have taken thy father’s son.”

XXI.

Although the child was led away,
 In Branksome still he seem’d to stay;
 For so the Dwarf his part did play;
 And, in the shape of that young boy,
 He wrought the castle much annoy.
 The comrades of the young Buccleuch
 He pinch’d, and beat, and overthrew;
 Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.
 He tore Dame Maudlin’s silken tire,
 And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
 He lighted the match of his bandelier,*
 And wofully scorch’d the hackbuteer,†
 It may be hardly thought or said,
 The mischief that the urchin made,
 Till many of the castle guess’d,
 That the young Baron was possess’d!

XXII.

Well I ween the charm he held
 The noble Ladye had soon dispell’d;
 But she was deeply busy then
 To tend the wounded Deloraine.
 Much she wonder’d to find him lie,
 On the stone threshold stretch’d along;
 She thought some spirit of the sky
 Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong,
 Because, despite her precept dread,
 Perchance he in the book had read;
 But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
 And it was earthly steel and wood.

* *Bandelier*, belt for carrying ammunition.† *Hackbuteer*, musketeer.

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood;⁴⁵
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound;
No longer by his couch she stood;
But she has ta'en the broken lance,⁴⁶
And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turned it round and round,
Twisted as if she gall'd his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound,
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toil'd; for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So pass'd the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret loved and bless'd
The hour of silence and of rest.
On the high turret sitting lone,
She waked at times the lute's soft tone;
Touch'd a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorn's green.
Her golden hair stream'd free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

XXV.

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
Oh! 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

The warder view'd it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river, rung around.

The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
 And startled forth the warriors all;
 Far downward, in the castle yard,
 Full many a torch and cresset glared;
 And helms and plumes, confusedly toss'd,
 Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
 And spears in wild disorder shook,
 Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
 Was redden'd by the torches' glare,
 Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
 And issued forth his mandates loud:--
 "On Penchryst glows a bale* of fire,"⁴⁷
 And three are kindling on Priesthaugh-swire.
 Ride out, ride out,
 The foe to scout!
 Mount, mount for Branksome,† every man!
 Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnston clan,
 That ever are true and stout—
 Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
 For when they see the blazing bale,
 Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
 Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
 And warn the Warder of the strife.
 Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
 Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise."⁴⁸

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
 Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
 While loud the harness rung,
 As to their seats, with clamour dread,
 The ready horsemen sprung:
 And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
 And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
 And out! and out!
 In hasty route,
 The horsemen gallop'd forth;
 Dispersing to the south to scout,
 And east, and west, and north,
 To view their coming enemies,
 And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
 Awaked the need-fire's ‡ slumbering brand,

* *Bale*, a beacon of fire.

† *Mount for Branksome*, the gathering word of the Scotts.

‡ *Need-fire*, beacon.

And ruddy blush'd the heaven:
 For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
 Waved like a blood-flag on the sky
 All flaring and uneven;
 And soon a score of fires, I ween,
 From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen;
 Each with warlike tidings fraught;
 Each from each the signal caught;
 Each after each they glanced to sight,
 As stars arise upon the night.
 They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,*
 Haunted by the lonely earn;†
 On many a cairn's grey pyramid,⁴⁰
 Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
 Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
 From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
 And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
 That all should bowne‡ them for the Border.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
 The ceaseless sound of steel;
 The castle-bell, with backward clang,
 Sent forth the larum peal:
 Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
 Where massy stone and iron bar
 Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
 To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
 Was frequent heard the changing guard,
 And watch-word from the sleepless ward;
 While, wearied by the endless din,
 Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

XXXI.

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
 Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,
 And spoke of danger with a smile;
 Cheer'd the young knights, and council sage
 Held with the chiefs of riper age.
 No tidings of the foe were brought,
 Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
 Nor what in time of truce he sought.
 Some said that there were thousands ten;
 And others ween'd that it was nought

* *Tarn*, a mountain lake.† *Earn*, a Scottish eagle.‡ *Bowne*, make ready.

But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
 Who came to gather in black mail;*
 And Liddesdale, with small avail,
 Might drive them lightly back agen.
 So pass'd the anxious night away,
 And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound—the listening throng
 Applaud the Master of the Song;
 And marvel much, in helpless age,
 So hard should be his pilgrimage.
 Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
 His wandering toil to share and cheer;
 No son to be his father's stay,
 And guide him on the rugged way?
 "Ay, once he had—but he was dead!"
 Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
 And busied himself the strings withall,
 To hide the tear that fain would fall.
 In solemn measure, soft and slow,
 Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
 The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
 No longer steel-clad warriors ride
 Along thy wild and willow'd shore;
 Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
 All, all is peaceful, all is still,
 As if thy waves, since Time was born,
 Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
 Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
 Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II.

Unlike the tide of human time,
 Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
 Retains each grief, retains each crime
 Its earliest course was doom'd to know;

* Protection money exacted by freebooters.

And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,
Fell by the side of great Dundee.⁵⁰
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid?—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III.

Now over Border, dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,⁵¹
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,
While ready warriors seiz'd the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Show'd southern ravage was begun.⁵²

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
“Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,⁵³
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
It was but last St Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew
In vain he never twang'd the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower
That drove him from his Liddel tower;
And, by my faith,” the gate-ward said,
“I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid.”*

V.

While thus he spoke the bold yeoman
Entered the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,[†]
Could bound like any Billhope stag.⁵⁴

* Commanded by the Warden in person.

† The broken ground in a bog.

It bore his wife and children twain;
 A half-clothed serf* was all their train;
 His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
 Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,⁵⁵
 Laughed to her friends among the crowd.
 He was of stature passing tall,
 But sparely formed, and lean withal;
 A batter'd morion on his brow;
 A leather jack, as fence enow,
 On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
 A border axe behind was slung;
 His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
 Seemed newly dyed with gore;
 His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
 His hardy partner bore.

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
 The tidings of the English foe:—
 “Belted Will Howard is marching here,⁵⁶
 And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,⁵⁷
 And all the German hackbut-men,⁵⁸
 Who have long lain at Askerten:
 They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,
 And burned my little lonely tower:
 The fiend receive their souls therefor!
 It had not been burnt this year and more.
 Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
 Served to guide me on my flight;
 But I was chased the livelong night.
 Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
 Fast upon my traces came;
 Until I turn'd at Priestthaugh Scrogg,
 And shot their horses in the bog,
 Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
 I had him long at high despite:
 He drove my cows last Fastern's night.”

VII.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
 Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
 As far as they could judge by ken,
 Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
 Three thousand armed Englishmen—
 Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
 From Teviot, Ail, and Ettrick shade,
 Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.

* Bondsman.

There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
He that was last at the trysting-place
Was but lightly held of his gaye Ladye.

VIII.

From fair St Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave⁵⁹
Array'd beneath a banner bright.
The treasur'd fleur-de-luce he claims,
To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
Encamp'd by Falla's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith 'mid feudal jars;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd—
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX.

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd⁶⁰
With many a moss-trooper came on;
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood;
In the dark glen so deep below,
The herds of plunder'd England low;
His bold retainer's daily food.
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
In youth, might tame his rage for arms;
And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
And still his brows the helmet press'd,
Albeit the blanch'd locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow:
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand.

X.

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
 Came trooping down the Todshaw hill;
 By the sword they won their land,
 And by the sword they hold it still.
 Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
 How thy sires won fair Eskdale—
 Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
 The Beattisons were his vassals there.
 The earl was gentle and mild of mood,
 The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude;
 High of heart, and haughty of word,
 Little they reck'd of a tame liege Lord.
 The Earl into fair Eskdale came
 Homage and seignory to claim:
 Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot* he sought,
 Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought,"
 —"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
 Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need;
 Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow
 I can reign Bucksfoot better than thou."
 Word on word gave fuel to fire,
 Till so highly blazed the Beattison's ire,
 But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
 The vassals there their lord had slain.
 Sore he plied both whip and spur,
 As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir;
 And it fell down a weary weight,
 Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI.

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
 Full fain avenged would he be.
 In haste to Branksome's Lord he spoke.
 Saying, "Take these traitors to thy yoke;
 For a cast of hawks, and a purse of gold,
 All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold;
 Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattison's clan
 If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;
 But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
 For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
 A glad man then was Branksome bold,
 Down he flung him the purse of gold;
 To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain,
 And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
 He left his merry men in the midst of the hill,
 And bade them hold them close and still;

* The feudal superior, in certain cases, was entitled to the best horse of the vassal, in name of Heriot, or Herezeld.

And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said:
"Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind."—

XII.

Loudly the Beattison laugh'd in scorn;
"Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."—
He bléw his bugle so loud and hoarse,
That the dun-deér started at fair Craik-Cross;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the grey mountain-mist there did lances appear;
And the third blast rang with such a din,
That the echoes answer'd from Pentoun-linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances broke!
For each scornful word the Galliard had said,
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through;
Where the Beattisons' blood mixed with the rill,
The Galliard's-Haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison clan;
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Esk, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII.

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name,
From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,
From Woodhouseslie to Chester-glen.
Troop'd man and horse, and bow and spear;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,

And high her heart of pride arose:
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.
"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest:
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."

XIV.

Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd and shed full many a tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blush'd blood-red for very shame:—
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should ere be son of mine!"

XV.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But as a shallow brook they cross'd,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figur'd chang'd, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.

Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon healed again,
Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain;
And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaim'd the approaching southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;
And, glistening through the hawthorn's green,
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII.

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind, in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand:
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array'd beneath the banner tall,
That streamed o'er Acre's conquer'd wall;
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
Play'd "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,⁶¹
They knew no country, own'd no lord:
They were not arm'd like England's sons,
But bore the leven-darting guns;

Buff coats, all frounced and 'broider'd o'er,
 And morsing-horns * and scarfs they wore;
 Each better knee was bared, to aid
 The warriors in the escalade;
 All, as they march'd, in rugg'd tongue;
 Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XIX.

But louder still the clamour grew,
 And louder still the minstrels blew,
 When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
 Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
 His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
 Brought up the battles glittering rear.
 There many a youthful knight, full keen
 To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;
 With favour in his crest, or glove,
 Memorial of his ladye-love.
 So rode they forth in fair array,
 Till full their lengthen'd lines display;
 Then call'd a halt, and make a stand,
 And cried, "St George, for merry England!"

XX.

Now every English eye, intent
 On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
 So near they were, that they might know
 The straining harsh of each cross-bow
 On battlement and bartizan
 Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partisan;
 Falcon and culver,† on each tower,
 Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
 And flashing armour frequent broke
 From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
 Where upon tower and turret head,
 The seething pitch and molten lead
 Reek'd like a witch's cauldron red.
 While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
 The wicket opes, and from the wall
 Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
 His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;
 Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
 He ruled his eager courser's gait;
 Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance,
 And, high curvetting, slow advance:

* Powder-flasks.

† Ancient pieces of artillery.

In sign of truce, his better hand
 Display'd a peeled willow wand;
 His squire, attending in the rear,
 Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.⁶²
 When they espied him riding out,
 Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
 Sped to the front of their array,
 To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII.

"Ye English warden lords, of you
 Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
 Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
 In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
 With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand;
 And all yon mercenary band,
 Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
 My Ladye reads you swith return;
 And, if but one poor straw you burn,
 Or do our towers so much molest
 As scare one swallow from her nest,
 St Mary! but we'll light a brand
 Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."

XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
 But calmer Howard took the word:
 "May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
 To seek the castle's outward wall,
 Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show
 Both why we came, and when we go."
 The message sped, the noble Dame
 To the wall's outward circle came;
 Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
 To see the pursuivant appear.
 All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
 The lion argent deck'd his breast;
 He led a boy of blooming hue—
 O sight to meet a mother's view!
 It was the heir to great Buccleuch.
 Obeisance meet the herald made,
 And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV.

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
 'Gainst Ladye fair to draw their swords;
 But yet they may not tamely see,
 All through the Western Wardenry,
 Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
 And burn and spoil the Border-side;

And ill beseems your rank and birth
 To make your towers a flemen's-firth.*
 We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
 That he may suffer march-treason † pain.⁶³
 It was but last St Cuthbert's even
 He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,
 Harried ‡ the lands of Richard Musgrave,
 And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
 Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
 These restless riders may not tame,
 Either receive within thy towers
 Two hundred of my master's powers,
 Or straight they sound their warrison, §
 And storm and spoil thy garrison
 And this fair boy, to London led,
 Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV.

He ceas'd—and loud the boy did cry,
 And stretch'd his little arms on high;
 Implored for aid each well-known face,
 And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
 A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
 Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
 She gazed upon the leaders round,
 And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;
 Then, deep within her sobbing breast
 She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;
 Unalter'd and collected stood,
 And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

XXVI.

"Say to your Lords of high emprize,
 Who war on women and on boys,
 That either William of Deloraine⁶⁴
 Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
 Or else he will the combat take
 'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
 No knight in Cumberland so good,
 But William may count with him kin and blood.
 Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,⁶⁵
 When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford;⁶⁶
 And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
 And bare him ably in the flight,
 Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
 For the young heir of Branksome's line,
 God be his aid, and God be mine;

* An asylum for outlaws. † Border treason. ‡ Plundered. § Note of assault.

Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
 Here, while I live no foe finds room.
 Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
 Take our defiance loud and high;
 Our slogan is their lyke-wake* dirge,
 Our moat, the grave where they shall lie.

XXVII.

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
 Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame;
 His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
 Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,
 "St Mary for the young Buccleuch?"
 The English war-cry answered wide,
 And forward bent each Southern spear;
 Each Kendal archer made a stride,
 And drew the bowstring to his ear;
 Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;—
 But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,
 A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

XXVIII.

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless said,
 "What treason has your march betray'd?
 What make you here, from aid so far,
 Before you walls, around you war?
 Your foemen triumph in the thought,
 That in the toils the lion's caught.
 Already on dark Ruberslaw
 The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;*
 The lances, waving in his train,
 Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
 And on the Liddel's northern strand,
 To bar retreat to Cumberland,
 Lord Maxwell ranks his merry men good,
 Beneath the eagle and the rood;
 And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
 Have to proud Angus come;
 And all the Merse and Lauderdale
 Have risen with haughty Home.
 An exile from Northumberland,
 In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;
 But still my heart was with merry England,
 And cannot brook my country's wrong;
 And hard I've spurr'd all night to show
 The mustering of coming foe."

* *Wake*, watching a corpse previous to interment.

† *Weapon-schaw*, the military array of a county.

XXIX.

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers display'd,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—
Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX.

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?⁶⁷
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine⁶⁸
In single fight; and, if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he's cross'd,
'Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he stay'd,
And slow and sullenly obeyed.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride:
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight;

A guantlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said:—
“If in the lists good Musgrave’s sword
Vanquish’d the knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome’s Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain:
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe’er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm’d,
In peaceful march, like men unarm’d,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland.”

XXXIII.

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay’d,
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood’s recent sack they knew
How tardy was the Regent’s aid;
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed,
That lists should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn:
They fixed the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn,
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial harper, taught⁶⁹
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald’s battle-laws,⁷⁰
In the old Douglas’ day.

He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
 Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
 Or call his song untrue:
 For this, when they the goblet plied,
 And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
 The bard of Reull he slew.
 On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
 And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood;
 Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
 Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
 That dragg'd my master to his tomb;
 How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
 Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
 And wrung their hands for love of him,
 Who died at Jedwood Air?
 He died!—his scholars, one by one,
 To the cold silent grave are gone;
 And I, alas! survive alone,
 To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
 And grieve that I shall hear no more
 The strains, with envy heard before;
 For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
 My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused: the listening dames again
 Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
 With many a word of kindly cheer,—
 In pity half, and half sincere,—
 Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
 His legendary song could tell—
 Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
 Of feuds, whose memory was not;
 Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
 Of towers, which harbour now the hare;
 Of manners, long since changed and gone;
 Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
 So long had slept, that fickle Fame
 Had blotted from her rolls their name,
 And twined round some new minion's head
 The fading wreath for which they bled;
 In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
 Could call them from their marble hearse.
 The Harper smiled, well pleased; for ne'er
 Was flattery lost on Poet's ear;

A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.
Smiled, then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

CALL it not vain:—they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies:
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II.

Nor that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead;

Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
 And shrieks along the battle-plain.
 The chief, whose antique crownlet long
 Still sparkled in the feudal song,
 Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
 Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
 His ashes undistinguished lie,
 His place, his power, his memory die:
 His groans the lonely caverns fill,
 His tears of rage impel the rill;
 All mourn the minstrels harp unstrung,
 Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
 The terms of truce were scarcely made,
 When they could spy from Branksome's towers,
 The advancing march of martial powers.
 Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
 And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
 Bright spears above the columns dun,
 Glanced momentary to the sun;
 And feudal banners fair display'd
 The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
 From the fair Middle Marches came;
 The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,⁷¹
 Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!
 Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
 Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne
 Their men in battle-order set;
 And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
 That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
 Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
 Nor list I say what hundreds more,
 From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
 And Tweed's fair borders to the war,
 Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,
 And Hepburn's mingled banners come,
 Down the steep mountain glittering far,
 And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"⁷²

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
 On many a courteous message went;
 To every chief and lord they paid
 Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid,
 And told them,—how a truce was made,

And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine,
And how the Ladye pray'd them dear,
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble Lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary Seneschal
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubb'd more bold in fight;
Nor, when from war and armour free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:
The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day,
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.⁷³

VII.

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had died with gore the green:

The merry shout by Teviot-side
 Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
 And in the groan of death;
 And whingers,* now in friendship bare,
 The social meal to part or share,
 Had found a bloody sheath.
 'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change⁷⁴
 Was not unfrequent, or held strange,
 In the old Border-day:
 But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
 In peaceful merriment, sunk down
 The sun's declining ray.

VIII.

The blithsome signs of wassel gay
 Decay'd not with the dying day:
 Soon through the latticed windows tall
 Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
 Divided square by shafts of stone,
 Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
 Nor less the gilded rafters rang
 With merry harp and beakers' clang:
 And frequent, on the darkening plain,
 Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,
 Give the shrill watchword of their clan,⁷⁵
 And revellers, o'er their bowls proclaim
 Douglas or Dacre's conquering name.

IX.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
 At length the various clamours died:
 And you might hear from Branksome hill,
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
 Save when the changing sentinel
 The challenge of his watch could tell;
 And save, where, through the dark profound,
 The clanging axe and hammer's sound
 Rung from the nether lawn;
 For many a busy hand toil'd there,
 Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
 The lists' dread barriers to prepare
 Against the morrow's dawn.

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
 Despite the Dame's reproving eye;
 Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
 Full many a stifled sigh;

* A sort of knife, or poniard.

For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally.—
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay:
By times, from silken couch she rose;
While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
She view'd the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now, still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he raised his plumed head—
Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumber's break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII.

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
For all the vassalage:
But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
 That foul malicious urchin had
 To bring this meeting round;
 For happy love's a heavenly sight,
 And by a vile malignant sprite
 In such no joy is found;
 And oft I've deem'd, perchance he thought
 Their erring passion might have wrought
 Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
 And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
 And to the gentle Lady bright,
 Disgrace and loss of fame.
 But earthly spirit could not tell
 The heart of them that loved so well.
 True love's the gift which God has given
 To man alone beneath the heaven:
 It is not fantasy's hot fire,
 Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;
 It liveth not in fierce desire,
 With dead desire it doth not die;
 It is the secret sympathy,
 The silver link, the silken tie,
 Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
 In body and in soul can bind.—
 Now leave me Margaret and her Knight
 To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
 The pipe's shrill port * aroused each clan;
 In haste the deadly strife to view,
 The trooping warriors eager ran:
 Thick round the lists their lances stood,
 Like blasted pines in Ettrick Wood;
 To Branksome many a look they threw
 The combatants' approach to view,
 And bandied many a word of boast,
 About the knight each favour'd most.

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
 For now arose disputed claim,
 Of who should fight for Deloraine,
 'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestaine:
 They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
 And frowning brow on brow was bent;

* *The pipe's shrill port*—A martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes.

But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd and free from pain,
In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI.

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Lady's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmed by her side he walk'd,
And much, in courteous phrase, they talk'd
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shap'd of buff,
With satin slash'd and lined;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hoes with silver twined;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:
White was her whimple, and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.
He deem'd, she shudder'd at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight;
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII.

Prize of the field, the Young Buccleuch,
An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce ried the boy his present plight,
So much he long'd to see the fight.

Within the lists, in knightly pride,
 High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
 Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
 As marshals of the mortal field;
 While to each knight their care assign'd
 Like vantage of the sun and wind.
 Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
 In King and Queen, and Warden's name,
 That none, while lasts the strife,
 Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
 Aid to a champion to afford,
 On peril of his life;
 And not a breath the silence broke,
 Till thus the alternate Herald spoke:—

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

“Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
 Good knight and true, and freely born,
 Amends from Deloraine to crave,
 For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
 He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
 Is traitor false by Border laws;
 This with his sword he will maintain,
 So help him God, and his good cause!”

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

“Here standeth William of Deloraine,
 Good knight and true, of noble strain,
 Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
 Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat:
 And that, so help him God above!
 He will on Musgrave's body prove,
 He lies most foully in his throat.”

LORD DACRE.

“Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
 Sound trumpets!”—

LORD HOME.

—“God defend the right!”—
 Then Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
 When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
 Let loose the martial foes,
 And in mid list, with shield poised high,
 And measured step and wary eye,
 The combatants did close!

XXI.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife, and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.—

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band.
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped:—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran:
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man;
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear;
Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands.
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran:
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around,
As dizzy, and in pain;
And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each Ladye sprung from seat with speed:
Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and won?"
His plumed helm was soon undone—
"Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I've fought and won."—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throb'd at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun, deign'd she greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard said—
—For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united pray'd
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then broke her silence stern and still,—
"Not you, but Fate, has vanquish'd me;

Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quell'd, and love is free."—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand;
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she:—
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be;
For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble Lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took,
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn by help of gramarye;
How, in Sir William's armour dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And linger'd till he join'd the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told the former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his deathlike trance;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,

Who held him for some fleeting wraith,*
 And not a man of blood and breath.
 Not much this new allay he loved,
 Yet when he saw what hap had proved,
 He greeted him right heartilie.
 He would not waken old debate,
 For he was void of rancorous hate,
 Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
 In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
 Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
 Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
 He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
 Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
 And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now;
 When on dead Musgrave he look'd down;
 Grief darkened on his rugged brow,
 Though half disguised with a frown;
 And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
 His foeman's epitaph he made:—

XXIX.

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
 I ween, my deadly enemy;
 For, if I slew thy brother dear,
 Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
 And when I lay in dungeon dark,
 Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
 Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
 Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
 And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
 And thou wert now alive, as I,
 No mortal man should us divide,
 Till one, or both of us did die:
 Yet rest thee God! for well I know
 I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
 In all the northern counties here,
 Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
 Thou wert the best to follow gear!
 'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
 To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
 Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,⁷⁸
 And with the bugle rouse the fray
 I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
 Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

* The spectral apparition of a living person.

XXX.

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On levell'd lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale, to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his Father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hush'd the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous Southern Land,
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprised the land he loved so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

BREATHES there the man with soul so dead,
 Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land!
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
 As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
 From wandering on a foreign strand!
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
 For him no minstrel raptures swell;
 High though his titles, proud his name,
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
 The wretch, concentr'd all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
 Unwept, unhonour'd and unsung.

II.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
 Meet nurse for a poetic child!
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
 Land of the mountain and the flood,
 Land of my sires! what mortal hand
 Can e'er untie the filial band,
 That knits me to thy rugged strand!
 Still as I view each well-known scene,
 Think what is now, and what hath been,
 Seems as to me of all bereft,
 Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
 And thus I love them better still,
 Even in extremity of ill.
 By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
 Though none should guide my feeble way;
 Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
 Although it chill my wither'd cheek;*
 Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
 Though there, forgotten and alone,
 The Bard may draw his parting groan.

* The preceding four lines now form the inscription on the monument of Sir Walter Scott in the market place of Selkirk.

III.

Not scorn'd like me! to Branksome Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron gate;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring,

IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendour of the spousal rite,
How muster'd in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furr'd with miniver;
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound;
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek;
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh;
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she fear'd each holy place.
False slanders these:—I trust right well
She wrought not by forbidden spell;⁷⁷
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour:
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art,
But this for faithful truth I say,
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroider'd and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,⁷⁸
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon:
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Stewart and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share;
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,⁷⁹
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,⁸⁰
And cygnet from St Mary's wave;⁸¹
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
And flapp'd their wings and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;⁸²
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword,
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.

Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose:
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove and shook his head:—⁸³
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrade, cold and drench'd in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 'twas said
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;⁸⁴
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round,
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Ronald Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride."—
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale;
While shout the riders every one:
Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,⁸⁵
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX.

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dash'd from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierc'd him to the bone:

The venom'd wound and festering joint,
 Long after rued that bodkin's point.
 The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd;
 And board and flagons overturn'd.
 Riot and clamour wild began;
 Back to the hall, the Urchin ran;
 Took in a darkling nook his post,
 And grinn'd and mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X.

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
 Should mar the concord of the day,
 Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
 And first stept forth old Albert Græme,^{as}
 The Minstrel of that ancient name:
 Was none who struck the harp so well,
 Within the Land Debateable;
 Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
 Whoever lost, were sure to win;
 They sought the beeves that made their broth,
 In Scotland and in England both.
 In homely guise, as nature bade,
 His simple song the Borderer said.

XI.

ALBERT GRÆME.

It was an English Ladye bright,
 (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
 And she would marry a Scottish knight,
 For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
 (When he shone fair on Carlisle wall,)
 But they were sad ere day was done,
 Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
 (Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;) [;]
 Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
 For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
 (Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,) [;]
 And he swore her death, ere he would see
 A Scottish knight the lord of all

XII.

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all.

He pierced her brother to the heart,
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall:)—
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
And died for her sake in Palestine;
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII.

As ended Albert's simple lay.
Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
Renown'd in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivall'd long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stay'd,
And deem'd that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine,
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
And, faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favourite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas All-soul's eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show him the Ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hollow'd taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might:
On cross, and character, and talisman;
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
Cloudly and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
 The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
 O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
 Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
 All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined.
 And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine.
 Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find:—
 That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptured line.
 That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

XX.

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,
 And swept the goodly vision all away—
 So royal envy roll'd the murky storm
 O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
 Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
 On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
 The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,
 The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI.

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
 These hated Henry's name as death,
 And those still held the ancient faith,—
 Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
 Rose Harold, bard of brave St Clair;
 St Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
 Had with that lord to battle come.
 Harold was born where restless seas
 Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
 Where erst St Clairs held princely sway⁸⁸
 O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
 Still nods their palace to its fall,
 Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—⁸⁹
 Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland rave,
 As if grim Odin rode her wave;
 And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
 For all of wonderful and wild
 Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful
 In these rude isles might fancy cull;

For thither came, in times afar,
 Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war;
 The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
 Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;
 Kings of the main their leaders brave,
 Their barks the dragons of the wave.⁹⁰
 And there, in many a stormy vale,
 The Scald had told his wondrous tale;
 And many a Runic column high
 Had witnessed grim idolatry.
 And thus had Harold, in his youth,
 Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,—
 Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curl'd,⁹¹
 Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
 Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell⁹²
 Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
 Of chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
 By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
 Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
 Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold,⁹³
 Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
 And bade the dead arise to arms!
 With war and wonder all on flame,
 To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
 Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
 He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;
 Yet something of the Northern spell
 Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
 No haughty feat of arms I tell;
 Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
 That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.⁹⁴

“Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
 And, gentle Ladye, deign to stay!
 Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,⁹⁵
 Nor tempt the stormy frith to-day.

“The blackening wave is edged with white;
 To inch* and rock the sea-mews fly;
 The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,†
 Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

* Inch, Isle.

† Kelpie, Water-Demon.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round Ladye gay,
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch,
Why cross the gloomy frith to-day?

"'Tis not because Lord Lindsay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my Ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindsay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock
It ruddied all the copsewood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,⁹⁶
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around
Deep sacresty and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh!
The lordly line of high St Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each St Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken'd hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all:
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.
A secret horror check'd the feast,
And chill'd the soul of every guest;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elvish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, mutter'd, "Found! found! found!"

XXV.

Then sudden, through the darken'd air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flash'd the levin brand,
And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish page it broke.
It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight not seen by all;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME!"

And on the spot where burst the brand,
 Just where the page had flung him down,
 Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
 And some the waving of a gown.
 The guests in silence prayed and shook,
 And terror dimm'd each lofty look.
 But none of all the astonish'd train
 Was so dismay'd as Deloraine:
 His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
 'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er return;
 For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
 Like him of whom the story ran,
 Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.⁹⁷
 At length, by fits, he darkly told,
 With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
 That he had seen right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
 And knew—but how it matter'd not—
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
 All trembling heard the wondrous tale;
 No sound was made, no word was spoke,
 Till noble Angus silence broke;
 And he a solemn sacred plight
 Did to St Bride of Douglas make,⁹⁸
 That he a pilgrimage would take,
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
 Of Michael's restless sprite.
 Then each to ease his troubled breast,
 To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd:
 Some to St Modan made their vows,
 Some to St Mary of the Lowes,
 Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
 Some to our Lady of the Isle;
 Each did his patron witness make,
 That he such pilgrimage would take,
 And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
 All for the weal of Michael's soul.
 While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
 'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,
 Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII.

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
 Which after in short space befell:

Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Bless'd Teviot's Flower, and Cranstoun's heir:
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again.

More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence, and prayer divine,
When pilgrim chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath,
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath;
Through all the lengthened row;
No lordly look, nor martial stride;
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;
Silent and slow, like ghosts they glide
To the high altar's hallow'd side,
And there they knelt them down:
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the letter'd stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnish'd niche around
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frown'd.

XXX.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,
In long procession came;
Taper, and host, and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourish'd fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band,
The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
And bless'd them as they kneel'd;
With holy cross he signed them all,
And pray'd they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,
For the departed spirit's weal;

And ever in the office close
 The hymn of intercession rose;
 And far the echoing aisles prolong
 The awful burthen of the song—
 DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
 SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
 While the pealing organ rung.
 Were it meet with sacred strain
 To close my lay, so light and vain,
 Thus the holy Fathers sung:—

XXXI.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
 When heaven and earth shall pass away,
 What power shall be the sinner's stay!
 How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
 The flaming heavens together roll;
 When louder yet, and yet more dread,
 Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
 When man to judgment wakes from clay,
 Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
 Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

HUSH'D is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
 And did he wander forth alone!
 Alone, in indigence and age,
 To linger out his pilgrimage!
 No!—close beneath proud Newark's tower,
 Arose the Minstrel's lonely bower;
 A simple hut; but there was seen
 The little garden hedged with green,
 The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
 There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
 Oft heard the tale of other days;
 For much he loved to ope his door,
 And give the aid he begg'd before.
 So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
 When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,

And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Wav'd the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Hairhead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

The Eve of St. John.

SMAYLHO'ME, or Smallholm Tower, the scene of the following ballad, is situated on the northern boundary of Roxburghshire, among a cluster of wild rocks, called Sandiknow-Crags, the property of Hugh Scott, Esq. of Harden (now Lord Polwarth). The tower is a high square building, surrounded by an outer wall, now ruinous. The circuit of the outer court, being defended on three sides by a precipice and morass, is accessible only from the west, by a steep and rocky path. The apartments, as is usual in a Border keep, or fortress, are placed one above another, and communicate by a narrow stair; on the roof are two bartizans, or platforms, for defence or pleasure. The inner door of the tower is wood, the outer an iron gate; the distance between them being nine feet, the thickness, namely, of the wall. From the elevated situation of Smaylho'me Tower, it is seen many miles in every direction. Among the crags by which it is surrounded, one, more eminent, is called the *Watch-fold*, and is said to have been the station of a beacon, in the times of war with England. Without the tower-court is a ruined chapel. Brotherstone is a heath, in the neighbourhood of Smaylho'me Tower.

The catastrophe of the tale is founded upon a well-known Irish tradition. This ancient fortress and its vicinity formed the scene of the Poet's infancy, and seemed to claim from him this attempt to celebrate them in a Border tale.

THE Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day,
He spurr'd his courser on,
Without stop or stay, down the rocky way,
That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
His banner broad to rear;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack* was braced, and his helmet was laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore;
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron return'd in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour;
And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reach'd his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor †
Ran red with English blood;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hack'd and hew'd,
His acton pierced and tore,

* The plate-jack is coat-armour; the vaunt-brace, or wam-brace, armour for the body: the sperthe, a battle-axe.

† See Note.

His axe and his dagger with blood imbrued,
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage,
He held him close and still;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

"Come thou hither, my little foot-page,
Come hither to my knee;
Though thou art young, and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

"Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true!
Since I from Smaylho'me tower have been,
What did thy lady do?"—

"My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild watchfold;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

"The bittern clamour'd from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross
To the eiry Beacon Hill.

"I watch'd her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone;—
No watchman stood by the dreary flame,
It burned all alone.

"The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might! an Armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

"And many a word that war-like lord
Did speak to my lady there;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

"The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain-blast was still,
As again I watch'd the secret pair,
On the lonesome Beacon Hill.

"And I heard her name the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve;
And say, 'Come this night to thy lady's bower;
Ask no bold Baron's leave.

"He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch;
His lady is all alone;
The door she'll-undo, to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St. John.'—

"I cannot come; I must not come;
I dare not come to thee;
On the eve of St. John I must wander alone:
In thy bower I may not be.'—

"Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight!
Thou shouldst not say me nay;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer's day.

"And I'll chain the blood-hound, and the warder shall
And rushes shall be strew'd on the stair; [not sound,
So, by the black rood-stone, and by holy St. John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there?'

"Though the blood-hound be mute, and the rush beneath
And the warder his bugle should not blow, [my foot,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber to the east,
And my footstep he would know.'—

"O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east,
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en;
And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne.'

"He turn'd him around, and grimly he frown'd;
Then he laugh'd right scornfully—
'He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight,
May as well say mass for me:

"At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have power,
In thy chamber will I be.'—
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see."

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high;
"Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!"—

"His arms shone full bright in the beacon's red light;
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a bound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew."—

"Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould,
All under the Eildon-tree."—

"Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!
For I heard her name his name;
And that lady bright, she called the knight
Sir Richard of Coldinghame."—

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale—

"The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is stiff and
So I may not trust thy tale. [stark—

"Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain.

"The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drown'd the name;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!"

He pass'd the court-gate, and he oped the tower-gate,
And he mounted the narrow stair,

"To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her wait,
He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood;
Look'd over hill and vale;
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!"—

"Now hail, thou Baron true!

What news, what news from Ancram fight?
What news from the bold Buccleuch?"

"The Ancram moor is red with gore,
For many a southern fell;
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore,
To watch our beacons well."—

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said:

Nor added the Baron a word:

Then she stepp'd down the stair to her chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the Baron toss'd and turn'd,
And oft to himself he said,—

"The worms around him creep, and his bloody grave is
It cannot give up the dead!" [deep . . .

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was nigh-well done,
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the eve of good St. John.

The lady look'd through the chamber fair,
By the light of a dying flame;
And she was aware of a knight stood there—
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,
"For the holy Virgin's sake!"—
"Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
But, lady, he will not awake.

"By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain;
The mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
But, lady, they are said in vain.

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
Most foully slain, I fell;
And my restless sprite on the beacon's height,
For a space is doom'd to dwell.

At our trysting-place,* for a certain space,
I must wander to and fro;
But I had not had power to come to thy bower
Had'st thou not conjured me so."

Love master'd fear—her brow she cross'd;
"How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?"—
The vision shook his head!

"Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life;
So bid thy lord believe:
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive."

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam;
His right upon her hand;
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorch'd like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
Remains on that board impress'd;
And for evermore that lady wore
A covering on her wrist.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun;
There is a monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk, who speaks to none—
That nun was Smaylho'me's Lady gay,
That monk the bold Baron.

* *Trysting-place*—Place of rendezvous.

The Gray Brother.

A FRAGMENT,

(In the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.)

THE imperfect state of this ballad, which was written several years ago, is not a circumstance affected for the purpose of giving it that peculiar interest, which is often found to arise from ungratified curiosity. On the contrary, it was the Editor's intention to have completed the tale, if he had found himself able to succeed to his own satisfaction. Yielding to the opinion of persons, whose judgment, if not biassed by the partiality of friendship, is entitled to deference, he has preferred inserting these verses as a fragment, to his intention of entirely suppressing them.

The tradition, upon which the tale is founded, regards a house upon the barony of Gilmerton, near Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian. This building, now called Gilmerton Grange, was originally named Burndale, from the following tragic adventure. The barony of Gilmerton belonged, of yore, to a gentleman named Heron, who had one beautiful daughter. This young lady was seduced by the Abbot of Newbattle, a richly endowed abbey upon the banks of the South Esk, now a seat of the Marquis of Lothian. Heron came to the knowledge of this circumstance, and learned also, that the lovers carried on their guilty intercourse by the connivance of the lady's nurse, who lived at this house of Gilmerton Grange, or Burndale. He formed a resolution of bloody vengeance, undeterred by the supposed sanctity of the clerical character, or by the stronger claims of natural affection. Choosing, therefore, a dark and windy night, when the objects of his vengeance were engaged in a stolen interview, he set fire to a stack of dried thorns, and other combustibles, which he had caused to be piled against the house, and reduced to a pile of glowing ashes the dwelling, with all its inmates.

The scene with which the ballad opens, was suggested by the following curious passage, extracted from the life of Alexander Peden, one of the wandering and persecuted teachers of the sect of Cameronians, during the reign of Charles II. and his successor, James. This person was supposed by his followers, and, perhaps, really believed himself, to be possessed of supernatural gifts; for the wild scenes which they frequented, and the constant dangers which were incurred through their proscription, deepened upon their minds the gloom of superstition, so general in that age.

"About the same time he [Peden] came to Andrew Normand's house, in the parish of Alloway, in the shire of Ayr, being to preach night in his barn. After he came in, he halted a little, leaning

upon a chair-back, with his face covered; when he lifted up his head, he said, 'They are in this house that I have not one word of salvation unto;' he halted a little again, saying, 'This is strange. that the devil will not go out, that we may begin our work!' Then there was a woman went out, ill-looking upon almost all her life, and to her dying hour, for a witch, with many presumptions of the same. It escaped me, in the former passages, what John Muirhead (whom I have often mentioned) told me, that when he came from Ireland to Galloway, he was at family-worship, and giving some notes upon the Scripture read, when a very ill-looking man came, and sat down within the door, at the back of the *hallan* [partition of the cottage]: immediately he halted and said, 'There is some unhappy body just now come into this house. I charge him to go out, and not stop my mouth!' This person went out, and he insisted [went on] yet he saw him neither come in nor go out."—*The Life and Prophecies of Mr Alexander Peden*, Part II., sec. 26.

A friendly correspondent remarks, "That the incapacity of proceeding in the performance of a religious duty, when a contaminated person is present, is of much higher antiquity than the era of the Reverend Mr Alexander Peden." *Vide Hygini Fabulas*, cap. 26. "*Medea Corintho exul, Athenas, ad Ægeum Pandionis filium devenit in hospitium, eique nupsit.*

— "Postea sacerdos Dianæ Medeam exagitare cœpit, regique negabat sacra caste facere posse, eo quoad in ea civitate esset mulier venefica et scelerata; tunc exulatur."

THE Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
All on Saint Peter's day.
With the power to him given, by the saints in heaven
To wash men's sins away.

The Pope he was saying the blessed mass,
And the people kneel'd around,
And from each man's soul his sins did pass,
As he kiss'd the holy ground.

And all, among the crowded throng,
Was still, both limb and tongue,
While, through vaulted roof, and aisles aloof,
The holy accents rung.

At the holiest word he quiver'd for fear,
And falter'd in the sound—
And, when he would the chalice rear,
He dropp'd it to the ground.

"The breath of one of evil deed
Pollutes our sacred day;
He has no portion in our creed,
No part in what I say.

"A being, whom no blessed word
To ghostly peace can bring;
A wretch, at whose approach abhorr'd,
Recoils each holy thing.

"Up, up, unhappy! haste, arise!
My adjuration fear!
I charge thee not to stop my voice,
Nor longer tarry here!"

Amid them all a pilgrim kneel'd,
In gown of sackcloth gray;
Far journeying from his native field,
He first saw Rome that day.

For forty days and nights so drear,
I ween he had not spoke,
And, save with bread and water clear,
His fast he ne'er had broke.

Amid the penitential flock,
Seem'd none more bent to pray
But, when the Holy Father spoke,
He rose and went his way.

Again unto his native land
His weary course he drew,
To Lothian's fair and fertile strand,
And Pentland's mountains blue.

His unblest feet his native seat,
'Mid Eske's fair woods, regain;
Thro' woods more fair no stream more sweet
Rolls to the eastern main.

And lords to meet the pilgrim came,
And vassals bent the knee;
For all 'mid Scotland's chiefs of fame,
Was none more famed than he.

And boldly for his country, still,
In battle he had stood,
Ay, even when on the banks of Till
Her noblest pour'd their blood.

Sweet are the paths, O passing sweet!
By Eske's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, through copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun.

There the rapt poet's step may rove,
And yield the muse the day;
There Beauty, led by timid Love,
May shun the tell-tale ray;

From that fair dome, where suit is paid,
By blast of bugle free,¹
To Auchendinny's hazel glade,²
And haunted Woodhouselee.

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,³
And Roslin's rocky glen,⁴
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,⁵
And classic Hawthornden ?⁶

Yet never a path, from day to day,
The pilgrim's footsteps range,
Save but the solitary way
To Burndale's ruin'd grange.

A woful place was that, I ween,
As sorrow could desire;
For nodding to the fall was each crumbling wall,
And the roof was scathed with fire.

It fell upon a summer's eve,
While, on Carnethy's head,
The last faint gleams of the sun's low beams
Had streak'd the grey with red;

And the convent bell did vespers tell,
Newbattle's oaks among,
And mingled with the solemn knell
Our Ladye's evening song:

The heavy knell, the choir's faint swell,
Came slowly down the wind,
And on the pilgrim's ear they fell,
As his wonted path he did find.

Deep sunk in thought, I ween, he was,
Nor ever raised his eye,
Until he came to that dreary place.
Which did all in ruins lie.

He gazed on the walls, so scathed with fire,
With many a bitter groan—
And there was aware of a Gray Friar,
Resting him on a stone.

"Now, Christ thee save!" said the Gray Brother;
"Some pilgrim thou seemest to be."
But in sore amaze did Lord Albert gaze,
Nor answer again made he.

"O come ye from east, or come ye from west,
Or bring reliques from over the sea;
Or come ye from the shrine of St. James the divine,
Or St. John of Beverley?"—

"I come not from the shrine of St. James the divine,
Nor bring reliques from over the sea;
I bring but a curse from our father, the Pope,
Which for ever will cling to me."—

"Now, woful pilgrim, say not so!
But kneel thee down to me,
And shrive thee so clean of thy deadly sin,
That absolved thou mayst be."—

"And who art thou, thou Gray Brother,
That I should shrive to thee,
When He, to whom are given the keys of earth and heaven,
Has no power to pardon me?"

"O I am sent from a distant clime,
Five thousand miles away,
And all to absolve a foul, foul crime,
Done *here* 'twixt night and day."

The pilgrim kneel'd him on the sand,
And thus began his saye—
When on his neck an ice-cold hand
Did that Gray Brother laye.

* * * * *

The Shepherd's Tale.

"Another imperfect ballad, in which the Poet had meant to blend together two legends familiar to every reader of Scottish history and romance, has been found in the same portfolio, and the handwriting proves it to be of the same early date."—LOCKHART, vol. ii., p. 30.

* * * * *

AND ne'er but once, my son, he says,
Was you sad cavern trod,
In persecution's iron days,
When the land was left by God.

From Bewlie bog, with slaughter red,
A wanderer hither drew,
And oft he stopt and turn'd his head,
As by fits the night wind blew;

For trampling round by Cheviot edge
Were heard the trooper's keen,
And frequent from the Whitelaw ridge
The death-shot flash'd between.

The moonbeams through the misty shower
On yon dark cavern fell;
Through the cloudy night the snow gleam'd white,
Which sunbeam ne'er could quell.

"Yon cavern dark is rough and rude,
And cold its jaws of snow;
But more rough and rude are the men of blood,
That hunt my life below!

"Yon spell-bound den, as the aged tell,
Was hewn by demon's hands;
But I had lourd* melle with the fiends of hell,
Than with Clavers and his band."

He heard the deep-mouth'd blood-hound bark,
He heard the horses neigh,
He plunged him in the cavern dark,
And downward sped his way.

* *Lourd*: i.e., liefer—rather.

Now faintly down the winding path
Came the cry of the faulting hound,
And the mutter'd oath of baulked wrath
Was lost in hollow sound.

He threw him on the flinted floor,
And held his breath for fear;
He rose and bitter cursed his foes,
As the sounds died on his ear.

"O bare thine arm, thou battling Lord,
For Scotland's wandering band;
Dash from the oppressor's grasp the sword,
And sweep him from the land!

"Forget not thou thy people's groans
From dark Dunnottar's tower,
Mix'd with the sea-fowl's shrilly moans,
And ocean's bursting roar!

"O, in fell Clavers' hour of pride,
Even in his mightiest day,
As bold he strides through conquest's tide,
O stretch him on the clay!

"His widow and his little ones,
O may their tower of trust
Remove its strong foundation stones,
And crush them in the dust!"—

"Sweet prayers to me," a voice replied,
"Thrice welcome guest of mine!"
And glimmering on the cavern side,
A light was seen to shine.

An aged man, in amice brown,
Stood by the wanderer's side;
By powerful charm, a dead man's arm
The torch's light supplied.

From each stiff finger, stretch'd upright,
Arose a ghastly flame,
That waved not in the blast of night
Which through the cavern came.

O, deadly blue was that taper's hue,
That flam'd the cavern o'er,
But more deadly blue was the ghastly hue
Of his eyes who the taper bore.

He laid on his head a hand like lead,
As heavy, pale, and cold—

"Vengeance be thine, thou guest of mine,
If thy heart be firm and bold.

"But if faint thy heart, and caitiff fear
Thy recreant sinews know,
The mountain erne thy heart shall tear,
Thy nerves the hooded crow."

The wanderer raised him undismay'd:

"My soul, by dangers steel'd,
Is stubborn as my border blade,
Which never knew to yield.

"And if thy power can speed the hour
Of vengeance on my foes,
Theirs be the fate, from bridge and gate,
To feed the hooded crows."

The Brownie look'd him in the face,
And his colour fled with speed—

"I fear me," quoth he, "uneath it will be
To match thy word and deed.

"In ancient days when English bands
Sore ravaged Scotland fair,
The sword and shield of Scottish land
Was valiant Halbert Kerr.

"A warlock loved the warrior well,
Sir Michael Scott by name,
And he sought for his sake a spell to make,
Should the Southern foemen tame.

"'Look thou,' he said, 'from Cessford head,
As the July sun sinks low,
And when glimmering white on Cheviot's height
Thou shalt spy a wreath of snow,

"'The spell is complete which shall bring to thy feet
The haughty Saxon foe.'
For many a year wrought the wizard here,
In Cheviot's bosom low,

"Till the spell was complete, and in July's heat
Appear'd December's snow;
But Cessford's Halbert never came
The wondrous cause to know.

"For years before in Bowden aisle
The warrior's bones had lain,
And after short while, by female guile,
Sir Michael Scott was slain,

Cadyow Castle.

ADDRESSED TO THE RIGHT HON, LADY ANNE HAMILTON.

THE ruins of Cadyow, or Cadzow Castle, the ancient baronial residence of the family of Hamilton, are situated upon the precipitous banks of the river Evan, about two miles above its junction with the Clyde. It was dismantled, in the conclusion of the Civil Wars, during the reign of the unfortunate Mary, to whose cause the house of Hamilton devoted themselves with a generous zeal, which occasioned their temporary obscurity, and, very nearly, their total ruin. The situation of the ruins, embosomed in wood, darkened by ivy and creeping shrubs, and overhanging the brawling torrent, is romantic in the highest degree. In the immediate vicinity of Cadyow is a grove of immense oaks, the remains of the Caledonian Forest, which anciently extended through the south of Scotland, from the Eastern to the Atlantic Ocean. Some of these trees measure twenty-five feet, and upwards, in circumference; and the state of decay, in which they now appear, shows that they have witnessed the rites of the Druids. The whole scenery is included in the magnificent and extensive park of the Duke of Hamilton. There was long preserved in this forest the breed of the Scottish wild cattle. Their appearance is beautiful, being milk-white, with black muzzles, horns, and hoofs. The bulls are described by ancient authors as having white manes; but those of latter days had lost that peculiarity, perhaps by intermixture with the tame breed.

In detailing the death of the Regent Murray, which is made the subject of the following ballad, it would be injustice to my reader to use other words than those of Dr Robertson, whose account of that memorable event forms a beautiful piece of historical painting.

“Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh was the person who committed this barbarous action. He had been condemned to death soon after the battle of Langside, as we have already related, and owed his life to the Regent’s clemency. But part of his estate had been bestowed upon one of the Regent’s favourites, who seized his house, and turned out his wife, naked, in a cold night, into the open fields, where, before next morning, she became furiously mad. This injury made a deeper impression on him than the benefit he had received, and from that moment he vowed to be revenged of the Regent. Party rage strengthened and inflamed his private resentment. His kinsmen, the Hamiltons, applauded the enterprise. The maxims of that age justified the most desperate course he could take to obtain

vengeance. He followed the Regent for some time, and watched for an opportunity to strike the blow. He resolved at last to wait till his enemy should arrive at Linlithgow, through which he was to pass in his way from Stirling to Edinburgh. He took his stand at a wooden gallery, which had a window towards the street; spread a feather-bed on the floor to hinder the noise of his feet from being heard; hung up a black cloth behind him, that his shadow might not be observed from without; and, after all this preparation, calmly expected the Regent's approach, who had lodged, during the night, in a house not far distant. Some indistinct information of the danger which threatened him had been conveyed to the Regent, and he paid so much regard to it, that he resolved to return by the same gate through which he had entered, and to fetch a compass round the town. But, as the crowd about the gate was great, and he himself unacquainted with fear, he proceeded directly along the street; and the throng of people obliging him to move very slowly, gave the assassin time to take so true an aim, that he shot him, with a single bullet, through the lower part of his belly, and killed the horse of a gentleman who rode on his other side. His followers instantly endeavoured to break into the house whence the blow had come; but they found the door strongly barricaded, and, before it could be forced open, Hamilton had mounted a fleet horse, which stood ready for him at a back passage, and was got far beyond their reach. The Regent died the same night of his wound."

Bothwellhaugh rode straight to Hamilton, where he was received in triumph; for the ashes of the houses in Clydesdale, which had been burned by Murray's army, were yet smoking; and party prejudice, the habits of the age, and the enormity of the provocation, seemed to his kinsmen to justify the deed. After a short abode at Hamilton, this fierce and determined man left Scotland and served in France, under the patronage of the family of Guise, to whom he was doubtless recommended by having avenged the cause of their niece, Queen Mary, upon her ungrateful brother. De Thou has recorded, that an attempt was made to engage him to assassinate Gaspar de Coligni, the famous Admiral of France, and the buckler of the Huguenot cause. But the character of Bothwellhaugh was mistaken. He was no mercenary trader in blood, and rejected the offer with contempt and indignation. He had no authority, he said, from Scotland to commit murders in France; he had avenged his own just quarrel, but he would neither for price nor prayer avenge that of another man.—*Thuanus*, cap. 46.

The Regent's death happened 23d January, 1569. It is applauded or stigmatized, by contemporary historians, according to their religious or party prejudices. The triumph of Blackwood is unbounded. He not only extols the pious feat of Bothwellhaugh, "who," he observes, "satisfied with a single ounce of lead, him whose sacrilegious avarice had stripped the metropolitan church of St Andrews of its covering;" but he ascribes it to immediate divine inspiration, and the escape of Hamilton to little less than the miraculous interference of the Deity.—*JEBB*, vol. ii., p. 263. With equal injustice, it was, by others, made the ground of a general national reflection; for, when Mather urged Berney to assassinate Burleigh, and quoted the examples of Poltrot and Bothwellhaugh, the other conspirator

answered, "that neyther Poltrot nor Hambleton did attempt their enterpryse without some reason or consideration to lead them to it; as the one, by hyre, and promise of preferment or reward; the other, upon desperate mind of revenge, for a lyttle wrong done unto him, as the report goethe, according to the vyle trayterous dysposy-syon of the hoole natyon of the Scottes."—*MURDIN'S State Papers*, vol. i., p. 197.

WHEN princely Hamilton's abode
Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
The song went round, the goblet flow'd,
And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
Thrill to the music of the shade,
Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
And tune my harp, of Border frame,
On the wild banks of Evandale.

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
From pleasure's lighter scenes canst turn,
To draw oblivion's pall aside,
And mark the long-forgotten urn.

Then, noble maid! at thy command,
Again the crumbled halls shall rise;
Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
The past returns—the present flies.

Where, with the rock's wood cover'd side,
Were blended late the ruins green,
Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
And feudal banners flaunt between:

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
Was shagg'd with thorn and tangling sloe,
The ashler buttress braves its force,
And ramparts frown in battled row.

'Tis night—the shade of keep and spire
Obscurely dance on Evan's stream;
And on the wave the warder's fire
Is chequering the moonlight beam,

Fades slow their light; the east is gray;
The weary warder leaves his tower;
Steeds snort; uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
And merry hunters quit the bower.

The drawbridge falls—they hurry out—
Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
As, dashing o'er, the jovial rout
Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

First of his troop, the Chief rode on;¹
His shouting merry-men throng behind;
The steed of princely Hamilton
Was fleet^{er} than the mountain wind.

From the thick copse the roebucks bound,
The startled red-deer scuds the plain,
For the hoarse bugle's warrior sound,
Has roused their mountain haunts again.

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
Whose limbs a thousand years have worn
What sullen roar comes down the gale,
And drowns the hunter's pealing horn?

Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
That roam in woody Caledon,
Crashing the forest in his race,
The Mountain Bull comes thundering on.

Fierce, on the hunter's quiver'd band,
He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
Spurns, with black hoof and horn, the sand,
And tosses high his mane of snow.

Aim'd well, the Chieftain's lance was flown;
Struggling in blood the savage lies;
His roar is sunk in hollow groan —
Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the *pryse*!

'Tis noon—against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.

Proudly the Chieftain mark'd his clan,
On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
Yet miss'd his eye the boldest man
That bore the name of Hamilton.

“Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
Still wont our weel and woe to share?

Why comes he not our sport to grace?
 Why shares he not our hunter's fare?"—

Stern Claud replied, with darkening face,^a
 (Grey Paisley's haughty lord was he,)
 "At merry feast, or buxom chase,
 No more the warrior wilt thou see.

"Few suns have set since Woodhouslee^a
 Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets foam,
 When to his hearths in social glee,
 The war-worn soldier turn'd him home.

"There, wau from her maternal throes,
 His Margaret, beautiful and mild,
 Sate in her bower, a pallid rose,
 And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

"O change accursed! past are those days;
 False Murray's ruthless spoilers came,
 And, for the hearth's domestic blaze,
 Ascends destruction's volumed flame.

"What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
 Where mountain Eske through woodland flows,
 Her arms enfold a shadowy child—
 Oh! is it she, the pallid rose?

"The wilder'd traveller sees her glide,
 And hears her feeble voice with awe—
 'Revenge,' she cries, 'on Murray's pride!
 And woe for injured Bothwellhaugh!'"

He ceased—and cries of rage and grief
 Burst mingling from the kindred band,
 And half arose the kindling Chief,
 And half unsheathed his Arran brand.

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream and rock,
 Rides headlong, with resistless speed,
 Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke^a
 Drives to the leap his jaded steed;

Whose cheek is pale, whose eyeballs glare,
 As one some visioned sight had saw,
 Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair?—
 'Tis! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh.

From gory selle,* and reeling steed,
 Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound,
 And, reeking from the recent deed,
 He dash'd his carbine on the ground.

* *Selle*—Saddle. A word used by Spenser, and other ancient authors.

Sternly he spoke—" 'Tis sweet to hear
In good greenwood the bugle blown,
But sweeter to Revenge's ear,
To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

"Your slaughter'd quarry proudly trode,
At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
But prouder base-born Murray rode
Through old Linlithgow's crowded town.

"From the wild Border's humbled side,⁵
In haughty triumph marched he,
While Knox relax'd his bigot pride,
And smiled, the traitorous pomp to see.

"But can stern Power, with all his vaunt,
Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
Or change the purpose of despair?

"With hackbut bent, my secret stand,⁶
Dark as the purposed deed I chose,
And mark'd, where, mingling in his band,
Troop'd Scottish pikes and English bows.

"Dark Morton, girt with many a spear,⁷
Murder's foul minion, led the van;
And clash'd their broadswords in the rear
The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.⁸

"Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,⁹
Obsequious at their Regent's rein,
And haggard Lindesay's iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.¹⁰

"Mid pennon'd spears, a steely grove,
Proud Murray's plumage floated high;
Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.¹¹

"From the raised visor's shade, his eye,
Dark rolling, glanced the ranks along,
And his steel truncheon, waved on high,
Seem'd marshalling the iron throng.

"But yet, his sadden'd brow confess'd
A passing shade of doubt and awe;
Some fiend was whispering in his breast;
'Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"The death-shot parts—the charger springs—
Wild rises tumult's startling roar!

And Murray's plumed helmet rings—
Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

"What joy the raptured youth can feel,
To hear her love the loved one tell—
Or he, who broaches on his steel
The wolf, by whom his infant fell!

"But dearer to my injured eye
To see in dust proud Murray roll;
And mine was ten times trebled joy,
To hear him groan his felon soul.

"My Margaret's spectre glided near;
With pride her bleeding victim saw;
And shriek'd in his death-deafen'd ear,
'Remember injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault!
Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree! *
Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow!—
Murray is fall'n, and Scotland free!"

Vaults every warrior to his steed;
Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
"Murray is fall'n, and Scotland freed!
Couch, Arran! couch thy spear of flame!"

But, see! the minstrel vision fails—
The glimmering spears are seen no more;
The shouts of war die on the gales,
Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
The blackbird whistles down the vale,
And stunk in ivied ruins lie
The banner'd towers of Evandale.

For Chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
And Vengeance shouting o'er the slain,
Lo! high-born Beauty rules the steed,
Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may Peace and Pleasure own
The maids who list the minstrel's tale;
Nor e'er a rider guest be known
On the fair banks of Evandale!

An oak, half-sawn, with the motto *Invictus*, is an ancient cognizance of the
family of Hamilton.

NOTES.

NOTE 1, Page 8.—“*The feast was over in Branksome Tower.*”

In the reign of James I., Sir William Scott, of Buccleuch, chief of the clan bearing that name, exchanged, with Sir Thomas Inglis of Manor, the estate of Murdiestone, in Lanarkshire, for one-half of the barony of Branksome, or Brankholm,* lying upon the Teviot, about three miles above Hawick. He was probably induced to this transaction from the vicinity of Branksome to the extensive domain which he possessed in Ettricke Forest and in Teviotdale. In the former district he held by occupancy the estate of Buccleuch,† and much of the forest land on the river Ettricke. In Teviotdale, he held the barony of Eckford, by a grant from Robert II. to his ancestor, Walter Scott of Kirkurd, for the apprehending of Gilbert Ridderford, confirmed by Robert III., 3d May, 1424. Tradition imputes the exchange betwixt Scott and Inglis to a conversation in which the latter, a man, it would appear, of a mild and forbearing nature, complained much of the injuries which he was exposed to from the English borderers, who frequently plundered his lands of Branksome. Sir William Scott instantly offered him the estate of Murdiestone, in exchange for that which was subject to such egregious inconvenience. When the bargain was completed, he drily remarked, that the cattle in Cumberland were as good as those of Teviotdale, and proceeded to commence a system of reprisals upon the English, which was regularly pursued by his successors. In the next reign, James II. granted to Sir Walter Scott of Branksome, and to Sir David, his son, the remaining half of the barony of Branksome, to be held in blanch for the payment of a red rose. The cause assigned for the grant is their brave and faithful exertions in favour of the King against the house of Douglas, with whom James had been recently tugging for the throne of Scotland. This charter is dated the 2d February, 1443; and in the same month, part of the barony of Langholm, and many lands in Lanarkshire, were conferred upon Sir Walter and his son, by the same monarch. After the period of the exchange with Sir Thomas Inglis, Branksome became the principal seat of the Buccleuch family. The castle was enlarged and strengthened by Sir David Scott, the grandson of Sir William, its first possessor. But in 1570-1, the vengeance of Elizabeth, provoked by the inroads of Buccleuch and his attachment to the cause of Queen Mary, destroyed the castle, and laid waste the lands of Branksome. In the same year, the castle was repaired and enlarged by Sir Walter Scott, its brave possessor; but the work was not completed until after his death, in 1574, when his widow finished the building. This appears from the following inscriptions. Around a stone, bearing the arms of Scott of Buccleuch, appears the following legend:—“SIR W. SCOTT, OF BRANKHEIM, KNYT YOE OF SIR WILLIAM SCOTT OF KIRKURD, KNYT, BEGAN YE WORK UPON YE 24 OF MARCHE, 1571 ZEIR, QUHA DEPARTIT AT GOD'S PLEISOUR YE 17 APRIL, 1574.” On a similar compartment are sculptured the arms of Douglas, with this inscription:—“DAME MARGARET DOUGLAS, HIS SPOUS, COMPLEETIT THE FORSAID WORKS IN OCTOBER, 1575.” Over an arched door is inscribed the following moral verse:—

“IN VARLD IS NOCHT NATURE HES VROUCHT YAT SAL LEST AY.

THARFORE SERVE GOD KEIP VEIL YE ROD THY FAME SAL NOCHT DEKAY.”

SIR VALTER SCOT OF BRANKHOLME, KNIGHT, MARGARET DOUGLAS, 1571. Branksome Castle continued to be the principal seat of the Buccleuch family, while security was any object in the choice of a mansion. It has been since the residence of the Commissioners or Chamberlains of the family. From the various alterations which the building has undergone, it is not only greatly restricted in

* Brankholm is the proper name of the barony; but Branksome has been adopted as suitable to the pronunciation, and more proper for poetry.

† There are no vestiges of any building at Buccleuch, except the site of a chapel, where, according to a tradition current in the time of Scott of Satchells, many of the ancient barons of Buccleuch lie buried. There is also said to have been a mill near the solitary spot; an extraordinary circumstance, as little or no corn grows within several miles of Buccleuch. Satchell says it was used to grind corn for the hounds of the chieftain.

its dimensions, but retains little of the castellated form, if we except one square tower of massy thickness, being the only part of the original building which now remains. The whole forms a handsome modern residence. The extent of the ancient edifice can still be traced by some vestiges of its foundation, and its strength is obvious from the situation, on a steep bank, surrounded by the Teviot, and flanked by a deep ravine, formed by a precipitous brook. It was anciently surrounded by a wood, cut about fifty years ago, but is now replaced by the thriving plantation which has been formed by the noble proprietor, for miles around the ancient mansion of his forefathers.

NOTE 2, Page 8.—“*Nine-and-twenty knights of fame.*”

The ancient barons of Buccleuch, both from feudal splendour and from their frontier situation, retained in their household, at Branksome, a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands from their chief for the military service of watching and warding his castle. As Satchell tells us in his doggrel, these gentlemen, younger brothers of ancient families, were pensioners to the house of Buccleuch, and ready on all occasions, when their lord pleased to advertise them.

NOTE 3, Page 9.—“*And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow.*”

“Of a truth,” says Froissart, “the Scottish cannot boast of great skill with the bow, but rather bear axes, with which, in time of need, they give heavy strokes.” The Jedwood axe was a sort of partisan used by horsemen, as appears from the arms of Jedburgh, which have a cavalier mounted and armed with this weapon. It is also called a Jedward or Jeddart staff.

NOTE 4, Page 9.—“*They watch, against Southern force and guile.*”

Branksome Castle was continually exposed to the attacks of the English, both from its situation and the restless military disposition of its inhabitants, who were seldom on good terms with their neighbours.

NOTE 5, Page 9.—“*How Lord Walter fell.*”

Sir Walter Scott, of Buccleuch, succeeded to his grandfather, Sir David, in 1492. He was a brave and powerful baron, and warden of the west marches of Scotland. His death was the consequence of a feud betwixt the Scotts and Kerrs, the history of which is necessary to explain repeated allusions in the romance. In the year 1526, in the words of Pitscottie—“The Earl of Angus, and the rest of the Douglasses, ruled all which they liked, and no man durst say the contrary; wherefore, the king (James V., then a minor) was heavily displeased, and would fain have been out of their hands, if he might in any way. And to that effect wrote a quiet and secret letter, with his own hand, and sent it to the laird of Buccleuch, beseeching him ‘that he would come with his kin and friends, and all the power that he might be, and meet him at Melross, at his home-passing, and there to take him out of the Douglasses’ hands, and to put him to liberty, to use himself among the lave (rest) of his lords, as he thinks expedient.’”

“The Laird of Buccleuch convened all his kin and friends, and all that would do for him, to ride with him to Melrose, when he knew of the king’s home-coming. And so he brought with him six hundred spears, of Liddesdale and Annandale, and countrymen, and clans thereabout, and held themselves quiet while that the king returned out of Jedburgh, and came to Melrose, to remain there all that night.

“But when the Lords Home, Cessford, and Fernyhirst (the chiefs of the clan of Kerr) took their leave of the king, and returned home, then appeared the Laird of Buccleuch in sight, and his company with him, in an arrayed battle, intending to have fulfilled the king’s petition, and therefore came stoutly forward on the back side of Halidonhill. By that the Earl of Angus, with George Douglas, his brother, and sundry other of his friends, seeing this array arriving, they marvelled what the matter meant; while at the last they knew the Laird of Buccleuch with a certain company of the thieves of Annandale with him, they were less affeared, and made them manfully to the field company them, and said to the king, in this manner, ‘Sir, yon is Buccleuch, and thieves of Annandale with him, to unbeset your Grace from the gate (*i.e.*, interrupt your passage.) I vow to God they shall either fight or flee; and you shall tarry here on this knowe, and my brother George with you, with any other company you please, and I shall pass and pit yon thieves off the ground, and rid the gate unto your Grace, or else die for it.’ The king tarried still, as was directed; and George Douglas with him, and sundry other lairds, such as the Earl of Lennox and the Lord Erskine, and some of the king’s own servants; but all the lave (rest) passed with the Earl of Angus to the field against the Laird of Buccleuch, who joyned and countered cruelly both the said parties, in the field of Darnelinvir, either against other, with uncertain victory. But at the last, the Lord Home, hearing word of that matter, how it stood, returned

again to the king in all possible haste, with him the Lairds of Cessfoord and Fairnyhirst, to the number of fourscore spears, and set quickly on the lap and wing of the Laird of Buccleuch's field, and shortly bore them backward to the ground, which caused the Laird of Buccleuch, and the rest of his friends, to go back and flee, whom they followed and chased; and especially the Lairds of Cessfoord and Fairnyhirst followed furiouslie, till, at the foot of a path, the Laird of Cessfoord was slain by the stroke of a spear, by an Elliot, who was then servant to the Laird of Buccleuch. But when the Laird of Cessfoord was slain, the chase ended. The Earl of Angus returned again with great merriness and victory, and thanked God that he had saved him from that chance, and past with the king to Melrose, where they remained all that night. On the morn they past to Edinburgh with the king, who was very sad and dolorous of the slaughter of the Laird of Cessfoord, and many other gentlemen and yeomen slain by the Laird of Buccleuch, containing the number of fourscore and fifteen, which died in defence of the king, and at the command of his wishes."

In consequence of this battle there ensued a deadly feud betwixt the names of Scott and Kerr, which, in spite of all means used to bring about an agreement, raged for many years upon the borders. One of the acts of violence to which this quarrel gave rise was the murder of Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, who was slain by the Kerrs in the streets of Edinburgh in 1552. This is the event alluded to in Stanza VII., and the poem is supposed to open shortly after it had taken place.

NOTE 6, Page 9.—"*No! vainly to each holy shrine.*"

Among other expedients resorted to for staunching the feud betwixt the Scotts and the Kerrs, there was a bond executed in 1529 between the heads of each clan, binding themselves to perform reciprocally the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland, for the benefit of the souls of those of the opposite name who had fallen in the quarrel. This indenture is printed in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Vol. I, but either it never took effect, or else the feud was renewed shortly afterwards. Such pactions were not uncommon in feudal times; and, as might be expected, they were often, as in the present case, void of the effect desired.

NOTE 7, Page 10.—"*While Cessford owns the rule of Carr.*"

The family of Ker, Kerr, or Car, was very powerful on the Border. (*The name is spelled differently by the various families who bear it. Car is selected, not as the most correct, but as the most poetical rendering.*) Fynes Morrison remarks, in his travels, that their influence extended from the village of Preston-Grange, in Lothian, to the limits of England. Cessford Castle, the ancient baronial residence of the family, is situated near the village of Morebattle, within two or three miles of the Cheviot Hills. It has been a place of great strength and consequence, but is now ruinous. Tradition affirms that it was founded by Halbert, or Habby Ker, a gigantic warrior, concerning whom many stories are current in Roxburghshire. The Duke of Roxburgh represents Ker of Cessford. A distinct and powerful branch of the same name own the Marquis of Lothian as their chief. Hence the distinction betwixt Kerrs of Cessford and Fairnyhirst.

NOTE 8, Page 10.—"*Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed.*"

The Cranstouns, Lord Cranstoun, are an ancient Border family, whose chief seat was at Crailing, in Teviotdale. They were at this time at feud with the clan of Scott; for it happens that the Lady of Buccleuch, in 1557, beset the Laird of Cranstoun, seeking his life. Nevertheless, the same Cranstoun, or perhaps his son, was married to a daughter of the same lady.

NOTE 9, Page 10.—"*Of Bethune's line of Picardie.*"

The Bethunes were of French origin, and derived their name from a small town in Artois. There were several distinguished families of the Bethunes in the neighbouring province of Picardie. They numbered among their descendants the celebrated Duc de Sully; and the name was accounted among the most noble in France, while aught noble remained in that country (?). The family of Bethune, or Beatoun, in Fife, produced three learned and dignified prelates, namely,—Cardinal Beaton, and two successive archbishops of Glasgow, all of whom flourished about the date of the romance. Of this family was descended Dame Janet Beaton, Lady Buccleuch, widow of Sir Walter Scott of Branksome. She was a woman of a masculine spirit, as appeared from her riding at the head of her son's clan, after her husband's murder. She also possessed the hereditary abilities of her family in such a degree, that the superstition of the vulgar imputed them to supernatural knowledge. With this was mingled, by faction, the foul accusation of her having influenced Queen Mary to the murder of her husband. One of the placards preserved in Buchanan's *Detection*, accuses of Darnley's murder, "The

Erle Bothwell, Mr James Balfour, the persoun of Flikse, Mr David Chalmers, blak,—Mr John Spens, wha was principal deviser of the murder; and the Quene, assenting thairto, throu the persuasion of the Erle Bothwell, and *the witchcraft of the Lady Buccleuch.*"

NOTE 10, Page 11.—"*In Padua, far beyond the sea.*"

Padua was long supposed by the Scottish peasants to be the principal school of necromancy. The Earl of Gowrie, slain at Perth in 1600, pretended, during his studies in Italy, to have acquired some knowledge of the cabala, by which he said he could charm snakes, and work other miracles; and, in particular, could produce children without the intercourse of the sexes.—See the examination of Weymess of Bogie before the Privy Council, concerning Gowrie's conspiracy.

NOTE 11, Page 11.—"*His form no darkening shadow traced.*"

The shadow of a necromancer is independent of the sun. Glycas informs us that Simon Magus caused his shadow to go before him, making people believe it was an attendant spirit. The vulgar conceive that when a class of students have made a certain progress in their mystic studies, they are obliged to run through a subterranean hall, where the devil literally catches the hindmost in the race, unless he crosses the hall so speedily that the arch enemy can only apprehend his shadow. In the latter case the person of the sage never after throws any shade; and those who never thus *lost their shadow* always prove the best magicians.

NOTE 12, Page 11.—"*The viewless forms of air.*"

The Scottish vulgar, without having any very depraved notion of their attributes, believe in the existence of an intermediate class of spirits residing in the air or in the water, to whom they ascribe floods, storms, and all such phenomena as their own philosophy cannot readily explain. They are supposed to interfere in the affairs of mortals, sometimes with a malévolent purpose, and sometimes with milder views. It is said, for example, that a gallant baron having returned from the Holy Land to his Castle of Drumelzier, found his fair lady nursing a healthy child, whose birth did not by any means correspond to the date of his departure. Such an occurrence, to the credit of the dames of the crusaders be it spoken, were so rare as to require a miraculous solution. The lady therefore was believed, when she avowed confidently that the Spirit of the Tweed had issued from the river while she was walking upon its banks, and had compelled her to submit to its embraces; and the name of Tweedie was bestowed upon the child, who afterwards became Baron of Drumelzier, and chief of a powerful clan. To those spirits were also ascribed in Scotland—

"Alry tongues, that syllable men's names
Oh sands and shores and desert wildernesses."

NOTE 13, Page 13.—"*A fancied moss-trooper.*"

This was the usual appellation of the marauders upon the Border; a profession diligently pursued by the inhabitants on both sides, and by none more actively and successfully than by Buccleuch's clan. Even after the union of the crowns, the moss-troopers, although sunk in reputation, and no longer enjoying the pretext of national hostility, continued to pursue their calling.

Fuller includes, among the wonders of Cumberland, "the moss-troopers," so strange is the condition of their living:—1. "*Original.*—I conceive them the same called Borderers in Mr Camden; and characterized by him to be *a wild and warlike people*. They are called moss-troopers, because dwelling in the mosses, and riding in troops together. They dwell in the bounds, or meeting, of two kingdoms, but obey the laws of neither. They come to church as seldom as the 29th of February comes into the Kalendar.

2. "*Increase.*—When England and Scotland were united in Great Britain, they that formerly lived by hostile incursion betook themselves to the robbing of their neighbours. Their sons are free of the trade by their fathers' copy. They are like to Job, not in piety and patience, but in sudden plenty and poverty; sometimes having flocks and herds in the morning, none at night, and perchance many again next day. They may give for their motto, *vivitur ex rapto*, stealing from their honest neighbours what they sometimes require. They are a nest of hornets; strike one, and stir all of them about your ears. Indeed, if they promise safely to conduct a traveller, they will perform it with the fidelity of a Turkish Janissary; otherwise woe be to him that falleth into their quarters.

3. "*Height.*—Amounting, forty years since, to some thousands, these compelled the vicinage to purchase their security, by paying a constant rent to them. When in their greatest height, they had two great enemies, the *laws of the land*, and the

Lord William Howard of Naworth. He sent many of them to Carlisle, to that place where the officer always doth his work by day light. Yet these moss-troopers, if possibly they could procure the pardon for a condemned person of their company, would advance great sums out of their common stock, who, in such a case, *cast in their lots amongst themselves, and all have one purse.*

4. "*Decay.*—Caused by the wisdom, valour, and diligence, of the Right Hon. Chas. Lord Howard, Earl of Carlisle, who routed these English Tories with his regiment. His severity unto them will not only be excused, but commended, by the judicious, who consider how our great lawyer doth describe such persons who are solemnly outlawed—as thenceforward they wear a wolf's head, so that they may now fully be destroyed without any judicial inquisition, or who carry their own condemnation about, and deservedly die without law, because they refused to live according to law."—BRACON, l. 3, t. 2, c. 11.

5. "*Ruine.*—Such was the success of this worthy Lord's severity that he made a thorough reformation amongst them; and, the ringleaders being destroyed, the rest are reduced to obedience, and so, I trust, will continue."—FULLER'S WORTHIES OF ENGLAND, 1662, p. 216.

NOTE 14, Page 13.—"*How the brave boy in future war.*"

The arms of the Kerrs of Cessford were, *Vert* on a cheveron betwixt three unicorns' heads erased *argent*; three mollets *sable*. Crest, an unicorn's head *proper*. The Scotts of Buccleuch bore *Or* on a bend *azure*; a star of six points betwixt two crescents of the first.

NOTE 15, Page 13.—"*William of Deloraine.*"

The lands of Deloraine are adjoining to those of Buccleuch, in Eltricke Forest. They were immemorially possessed by the Buccleuch family, under the strong title of occupancy, although no charter was obtained from the crown until 1545. Like other possessions, the lands of Deloraine were occasionally granted by them to vassals or kinsmen for border-service. Satchell mentions, among the twenty-four gentlemen pensioners of the family, William Scott, commonly called *Cut at the Black*, who had the lands of Nether Deloraine for his services. And again, "this William of Deloraine, commonly called *Cut at the Black*, was a brother of the ancient house of Haining, which house of Haining is descended from the ancient house of Hassendean." The lands of Deloraine now give an earl's title to the descendant of Henry the Second, surviving son of the Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth. I have endeavoured to give William of Deloraine the attributes which characterized the Borderers of his day, for which I can only plead Froissart's apology, that "it behoveth, in a lynage, some to be folyshe and outrageous, to maynteyne and sustayne the peasable."

NOTE 16, Page 13.—"*Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds.*"

The kings and heroes of Scotland, as well as the Border-riders, were sometimes obliged to study how to evade the pursuit of blood-hounds. A sure way of stopping the dog, was to spill blood upon the track, which destroyed the discriminating fineness of his scent. A captive was sometimes sacrificed on such occasions. Henry the Minstrel tells a romantic story of Wallace, founded on this circumstance: the escape of Wallace at Gask, in Black-erne-side, by the sacrifice of Fawdoun, an Irishman and suspected traitor.

NOTE 17, Page 14.—"*Dimly he viewed the Moat-hills mound.*"

This is a round artificial mount near Hawick, which, from its name, (*Mot. Ang. sax. concilium conventus*) was probably anciently used as a place for assembling a national council of the adjacent tribes. There are many such mounds in Scotland, and they are sometimes, but rarely, of a square form.

NOTE 18, Page 14.—"*Beneath the towers of Hazeldean.*"

The estate of Hazeldean, corruptly Hassendean, belonged formerly to a family of Scotts, thus commemorated by Satchell:—

"Hassendean came without a call,
The ancientest house among them all."

NOTE 19, Page 15.—"*On Minto-crag the moon-betims glint.*"

A romantic assemblage of cliffs, which rise suddenly above the vale of Teviot, in the immediate vicinity of the family seat from which Lord Minto takes his title. A small platform, on a projecting crag, commanding a most beautiful prospect, is termed *Barnhills' Bed*. This Barnhill is said to have been a robber or outlaw. There are remains of a strong tower here in the rocks, where he is supposed to

have dwelt, and from which he derived his name. On the summit of the crags there are the fragments of another ancient tower, in a very picturesque situation. Among the houses cast down by the Earl of Hertforde in 1545, occur the towers of Eastern Barnhills, and of Minto-crag, with Minto town and place.

NOTE 20, Page 15.—“*Ancient Riddel's fair domain.*”

The family of Riddell have been very long in possession of the barony called Riddell, or Ryedale, part of which still bears the latter name. Tradition carries their antiquity to a point extremely remote; and is in some degree sanctioned by the discovery of two stone coffins—one containing an earthenware pot, filled with ashes and arms, bearing a legible date, A.D. 727; the other dated 936, and filled with the bones of a man of gigantic size. These coffins were found in the foundation of what was, but has long since ceased to be, the Chapel of Riddell; and as it was urged, with plausibility, that they contained the remains of some ancestor of the family, they were deposited in the more modern place of sepulture, comparatively so termed, though built in 1110. Curious and authentic documents narrate most conclusively the epithet of ancient Riddell. It is remarkable that Lilies-clive, otherwise Rydale, or Riddel, and the Whitternes, have descended, through a long train of ancestors, without ever passing into a collateral line.

NOTE 21, Page 16.—“*As glanced his eye o'er Halidon.*”

Halidon was an ancient seat of the Kerrs of Crossford, now demolished. About a quarter of a mile to the northward lay the field of battle betwixt Buccleuch and Angus, which is called to this day the Skirmish Field.

NOTE 22, Page 16.—“*Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran.*”

The ancient and beautiful monastery of Melrose was founded by David I. Its ruins afford the finest specimen of Gothic architecture and Gothic sculpture which Scotland can boast. The stone of which it is built, though it has resisted the weather for so many ages, retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seem as entire as when newly wrought. In some of the cloisters there are representations of flowers, vegetables, etc., carved in stone, with accuracy and precision so delicate, that we almost distrust our senses when we consider the difficulty of subjecting so hard a substance to so intricate and exquisite modulation. This superb convent was dedicated to St Mary, and the monks were of the Cistercian order. At the time of the Reformation they shared in the general reproach of sensuality and irregularity thrown upon the Roman churchmen. The old words of *Galashiels*, a favourite Scottish air, ran thus:—

“O, the monks of Melrose made gude kale*
On Fridays, when they fasted!
They never wanted beef nor ale
As long as their neighbours' lasted.”

NOTE 23, Page 17.—“*The scrolls that teach thee to live and die.*”

The buttresses ranged along the sides of the ruins of Melrose, are, according to the Gothic style, richly carved and fretted, containing niches for the statues of saints, and labelled with scrolls, having appropriate texts of Scripture. Most of these statues have been demolished.

NOTE 24, Page 17.—“*St David's ruined pile.*”

David the First of Scotland purchased the reputation for sanctity, by founding, and liberally endowing, not only the monastery of Melrose, but those of Kelso, Jedburgh, and many others, which led to the well-known observation of his successor, that he was *a sore saint to the crown*.

NOTE 25, Page 18.—“*—gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.*”

The Buccleuch family were great benefactors of the Abbey of Melrose. As early as the reign of Robert II., Robert Scott, Baron of Murdieston and Rankelburn (from Buccleuch), gave to the monks the lands of Hinkery, in Ettrick Forest, *pro salute animae suae*.—CART. OF MELROSE, 28th May, 1415.

NOTE 26, Page 18.—“*Prayer know I hardly one.*”

The Borderers were, as may be supposed, very ignorant about religious matters. Colville, in his *Paranensis*, or *Admonitur*, states that the reformed divines were so far from undertaking distant journeys to convert the heathen “as I wold wis at God that you would only go bot to the Hiellands and Borderers of our own realm,

* *Kale*—broth.

to gain our awin contreyemen, who, for lack of preching and ministratioun of the sacraments, must, with tyme, becom either infidells or atheists." But, we learn from Lesley, that, however deficient in real religion, they regularly told their beads, and never with more zeal than when going on a plundering expedition.

NOTE 27, Page 19.—"*Beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.*"

The cloisters were frequently used as places of sepulture. An instance occurs in Dryburgh Abbey, where the cloister has an inscription, bearing—*Hic jacet frater Archibaldus.*

NOTE 28, Page 20.—"*O gallant Chief of Otterburne.*"

The famous and desperate battle of Otterburne was fought on 15th August, 1388, between Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and James Earl of Douglas. Both these renowned champions were at the head of a chosen body of troops, and they were rivals in military fame, so that, Froissart affirms, "of all the bataylles and encountroynges that I have made mension of here before in all this hystory, great or small, this batayll, that I treat of now, was one of the sorest and best foughten, without cowardes or faynte herts; for there was neyther knyghte nor squyer but that dyde his devoyre, and fought hande to hande. This batayll was like the batayll of Becherell, the which was valientlye fought and endured." The issue of this conflict is well known: Percy was made prisoner, and the Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose, beneath the high altar. "His obseque was done reverently, and on his body layde a tombe of stone, and his baner hangyng over hym."—FROISSART, Vol. II., p. 161.

NOTE 29, Page 20.—"*— Dark Knight of Liddesdale.*"

William Douglas, called the Knight of Liddesdale, flourished during the reign of David II.; and was called the Flower of Chivalry. Nevertheless, he tarnished his renown by the cruel murder of Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, originally his friend and brother in arms. The king had conferred upon Ramsay the Sherifdom of Teviotdale, to which Douglas pretended some claim. In revenge of this preference, the Knight of Liddesdale came down upon Ramsay, while he was administering justice at Hawick, seized, and carried him off to his remote and inaccessible Castle of Hermitage, where he threw his unfortunate prisoner, horse and man, into a dungeon, and left him to perish of hunger. It is said the miserable captive prolonged his existence for several days by the corn which fell from a granary above the vault in which he was confined.* So weak was the royal authority, that David, though highly incensed at this atrocious murder, found himself obliged to appoint the Knight of Liddesdale successor to his victim, as Sheriff of Teviotdale. But he was soon after slain, while hunting in Ettrick Forest, by his own godson and chieftain, William, Earl of Douglas, in revenge, according to some authors, of Ramsay's murder; although a popular tradition, preserved in a ballad quoted by Godscroft, and some parts of which are still preserved, ascribe the resentment of the Earl to jealousy. The place where the Knight of Liddesdale was killed, is called, from his name, William's-Cross, upon the ridge of a hill, called William-Hope, betwixt Tweed and Yarrow. His body, according to Godscroft, was carried to Lindean Church, the first night after his death, and thence to Melrose, where he was interred with great pomp, and where his tomb is still shown.

NOTE 30, Page 20.—"*The moon on the east oriel shone.*"

It is impossible to conceive a more beautiful specimen of the lightness and elegance of Gothic architecture, when in its purity, than the eastern window of Melrose Abbey. Sir James Hall of Dunglass, Bart., has traced the Gothic order through its various forms, and seemingly eccentric ornaments, to an architectural imitation of wicker-work; of which, as we learn from some of the legends, the earliest Christian churches were constructed. In such an edifice, the original of the clustered pillars is twined to a set of round posts, begirt with slender rods of willow, whose loose summits were brought to meet from all quarters, and bound together artificially, so as to produce the firmer work of the roof; and the tracery of our Gothic windows is displayed in the meeting and interlacing of rods and hoops, affording an inexhaustible variety of beautiful forms of open work. This ingenious system is alluded to in the romance.

* (Some years ago, a person digging for stones, about the old Castle of Hermitage, broke into a vault, containing a quantity of chaff, some bones, and pieces of iron; amongst others, the curb of an ancient bridle, which the author has since given to the Earl of Dalhousie, under the impression, that it possibly may be a relique of his brave ancestor).

NOTE 31, Page 20.—“*A Scottish Monarch slept below.*”

A large marble stone, in the chancel of Melrose, is pointed out as the monument of Alexander II., one of the greatest of our early kings; others say it is the resting place of Waldeve, one of the early abbots, who died in the odour of sanctity.

NOTE 32, Page 20.—“*The wondrous Michael Scott.*”

Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie flourished during the 13th century, and was one of the ambassadors sent to bring the Maid of Norway to Scotland upon the death of Alexander III. By a poetical anachronism, he is here placed in a later era. He was a man of much learning, chiefly acquired in foreign countries. He wrote a commentary upon Aristotle, printed at Venice in 1496, and several treatises upon natural philosophy, from which he appears to have been addicted to the abstruse studies of judicial astrology, alchemy, physiognomy, and chiromancy. Hence he passed among his contemporaries for a skilful magician. Dempster (1627) informs us, that he remembers to have heard in his youth, that the magic books of Michael Scott were still in existence, but could not be opened without danger, on account of the fiends who were thereby invoked. A person of such repute loses little of his mystical fame in vulgar tradition, and the memory of Sir Michael Scott survives in many a legend; and in the south of Scotland, any work of great labour and antiquity is ascribed either to the agency of *Auld Michael*, or Sir William Wallace, or of the devil. Tradition varies concerning the place of his burial: some contend for Holme Coltrame, in Cumberland; others for Melrose Abbey. But all agree, that his books of magic were interred in his grave, or preserved in the convent where he died.

NOTE 33, Page 20.—“*Salamanca's cave.*”

Spain, from the reliques, doubtless, of Arabian learning and superstition, was accounted a favourite residence of magicians. Pope Sylvester, who actually imported from Spain the use of the Arabian numerals, was supposed to have learned there the magic for which he was distinguished by the ignorance of his age. There were public schools, where magic, or rather the sciences supposed to involve its mysteries, were regularly taught at Toledo, Seville, and Salamanca. In the latter city it was held in a deep cavern; the mouth of which was walled up by Queen Isabella, wife of King Ferdinand. The celebrated magician Mangis, cousin to Rinaldo of Montalban, called by Ariosto, Malagigi, studied the black art at Toledo. He even held a professor's chair in the necromantic university. This Salamanican Domdaniel is said to have been founded by Hercules. If the classic reader inquires where Hercules himself learned magic, he may consult *Les Faits et proses du noble et vaillant Hercules*, where he will learn that the fable of his aiding Atlas to support the heavens arose from the said Atlas having taught Hercules, the noble knight-errant, the seven liberal sciences, and, in particular, that of judicial astrology. Such, according to the idea of the middle ages, were the studies, *Maximis quæ docuit Atlas*. In a romantic history of Roderic, the last Gothic king of Spain, he is said to have entered one of those enchanted caverns. It was situated beneath an ancient tower near Toledo; and, when the iron gates which secured the entrance were unfolded, there rushed forth so dreadful a whirlwind, that hitherto no one had dared to penetrate into its recesses. But Roderic, threatened with an invasion of the Moors, resolved to enter the cavern, where he expected to find some prophetic intimation of the event of the war. Accordingly, his train being furnished with torches so artistically composed that the tempest could not extinguish them, the king, with great difficulty, penetrated into a square hall, inscribed all over with Arabian characters. In the midst stood a colossal statue of brass, representing a Saracen wielding a Moorish mace, with which it discharged furious blows on all sides, and served thus to excite the tempest which raged around. Being surprised by Roderic, it ceased from striking until he read, inscribed on its right hand, “*Wretched monarch, for thy evil hast thou come hither;*” on the left hand, “*Thou shalt be dispossessed by a strange people;*” on one shoulder, “*I invoke the sons of Hagar;*” on the other, “*I do mine office.*” When the king had deciphered these ominous inscriptions, the statue returned to its exercise; the tempest commenced anon, and Roderic retired to mourn over the predicted evils which approached his throne. He caused the gates of the cavern to be locked and barricaded; but, in the course of the night, the tower fell with a tremendous noise, and under its ruins concealed for ever the entrance to the mystic cavern. The conquest of Spain by the Saracens, and the death of the unfortunate Don Roderic, fulfilled the prophecy of the brazen statue.

NOTE 34, Page 30. — "*The bells would ring in Notre Dame.*"

Michael Scott was chosen, tradition saith, to go upon an embassy, to obtain from the King of France satisfaction for certain practices committed by his subjects upon those of Scotland. Instead of preparing a new equipage and splendid retinue, the ambassador returned to his study, opened his book, and evoked a fiend in the shape of a huge black horse, mounted upon his back, and forced him to fly through the air towards France. As they crossed the sea, the devil inaudibly asked his rider, what it was that the old women of Scotland muttered at bad time? A less experienced wizard might have answered, that it was *Pater Noster*, which would have licensed the devil to precipitate him from his body. But Michael sternly replied, "What is that to thee? Mount, Diabulus, and fly!" When he arrived at Paris, he tied his horse badly delivered his message. An embarrassing circumstance of diplomacy, was not rec was about to return a contemptuous denouement to suspend his resolution times. The first stamp shrank every step, the second threw down three of the steed had lifted his hoof to give the third dismissal Michael with the most ample consequences. Upon another occasion, the mountains that he became lame for some from the nearest farm house. The the farmer Michael commanded him before him his cap, or bonnet, repeating *man sought none, and got none*. His bonnet became suddenly inflated, and speed, pursued by the farmer, his wife, his servants, and the rascals who were on the neighbouring *Acres*. No one had the power to resist the fascination, or refrain from joining in pursuit of the bonnet, until they were totally exhausted with their ludicrous exertions. Michael, like his predecessor Merlin, fell at last a victim to female art. His wife, or concubine, elicited out of him the secret that his art could ward off any danger except the poisonous qualities of broth, made of the flesh of a *Brown cow*. Such a man she accordingly administered to the wizard, who died in consequence of eating it.

NOTE 35, Page 30. — "*The words that cleft Eildon hills in three*"

Michael Scott was, once upon a time, much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. He commanded him to build a *cauld* or dam head, across the Tweed at Kelso. It was accomplished in one night, and still does honour to the infernal architect. Michael next ordered that Eildon hill, which was then a uniform cone, should be divided into three. Another night was sufficient to part its summit into the three picturesque peaks which it now bears. At length the enchanter conquered this mischievous demon, by employing him in the hopeless and endless task of making ropes of sea sand.

NOTE 36, Page 31. — "*That lamp shall burn unquenchably*"

Dante's Porta, and others who treat of natural magic, talk much of eternal lamps pretended to have been used in ancient sepulchres. Kircher enumerates three different receipts for constructing such lamps, and wisely concludes that the thing is impossible. Delno imputes the fabrication of such lights to magical skill.

NOTE 37, Page 32. — "*He thought, as he took it, the dead man from it*"

William of Deloigne might be strengthened in this belief by the well known story of *Lid Ruy Diaz*. When the body of that famous Christian champion was lying in state a certain malicious Jew stole into the chamber to pull him by the beard but he had no sooner touched the formidable whiskers, than the corpse started up, and half unsheathed his sword. The Jew fled and so permanent was the effect of his terror, that he became a Christian. — *HARVARD'S HISTORY*, p. 480, quoted from *Sebastian Cabot's History* (1592).

NOTE 38, Page 35. — "*The Baron's Dream of his courier held*"

The idea of Lord Cranston's goblin page is taken from a being called *Gilpin Horner*, who appeared and made some stay at a farm-house among the border-mountains. A gentleman of that country has noted down the following particulars. "The most probable account that I ever heard of Gilpin Horner, was from an old man named Anderson, who was born, and lived all his life at *Caldwell*, in *Eskdale-muir*, the place where Gilpin appeared and stayed some time. He said there were two men, when it was growing dark, employed in fastening the horses

in the uttermost part of their ground (that is, tying their fore-feet together, to hinder them from travelling far in the night), when they heard a voice, at some distance, crying, '*tint! tint! tint!*' (lost?). One of the men called out, 'What de'il has tint you?—come here.' Immediately, a creature of something like a human form appeared. It was surprisingly little, distorted in features, and misshapen in limbs. As soon as the two men could see it plainly, they ran home in great fright, imagining they had met with some goblin. By the way, one of them fell, and it run over him, and was home at the house as soon as any of them, stayed there a long time, but I cannot say how long. It was real flesh and blood, and eat and drank, was fond of cream, and, when it could get it, would destroy a great deal. It seemed a mischievous creature; and any of the children whom it could master, it would beat and scratch without mercy. It was once chasing a child belonging to Moffat, the man who had been so frightened by its first appearance; and he, in a passion, struck it a violent blow upon the side of the head, that it tumbled upon the ground; but it was not stunned, for it set up its voice directly, and exclaimed, 'Ah, hab! Will O'Moffat, you strike sair!' (*sore*). After it had stayed there long, one evening, when the women were milking the cows in the loan, it was playing among the children near by them, when suddenly they heard a loud shrill voice cry, three times, *Gilpin Horner!* It started, and said, '*That is me,*' I must away, and instantly disappeared, and was heard of no more." To this account I have to add the following particulars, from the most reputable authority—Besides constantly repeating the word *tint! tint!* Gilpin Horner was often heard to call upon Peter Bertram, or Be-te-ram, as he pronounced the word; and when the shrill voice called Gilpin Horner, he immediately acknowledged it as the summons of the said Peter Bertram, who seems therefore to have been the devil who had tint, or lost, the little imp.

NOTE 39, Page 26.—"*The Ladye of Branksome gathered a band.*"

Upon 25th June, 1557, Dame Janet Beatoune, Lady Buccleuch, and a great number of the name of Scott, delaitit (accused) for coming to the Kirk of St Mary's of the Lowes, to the number of two hundred persons, bodin in feir of ware (arrayed in armour), and breaking open the doors of the said kirk, in order to apprehend the Laird of Cranstoun for his destruction. On July 20th, a warrant from the Queen is presented, discharging the justice to proceed against the Lady Buccleuch. . . . Proceedings on this case appear in the record of the court on 25th June, 1557. Robert Scott, in Bowhill parish, parish of the Kirk of St Mary's, accused of the convocation of the Queen's lieges, to the number of 200 persons, in warlike array, with jacks, helmets, and other weapons, and marching to the Chapel of St Mary's of the Lowes, for the slaughter of Sir Peter Cranstoun, out of ancient feud and malice prepense, and of breaking the door of the said kirk, is repledged by the Archbishop of Glasgow. The bail given by Robert Scott of Allahaugh, Adam Scott of Burnefute, Robert Scott in Howfurde, Walter Scott in Todshawhaugh, Walter Scott younger of Synton, Hanyning, Robert Scott, and William Scott, and James Scott, brothers of the said Walter Scott, in the Woll, William Scott of Harden, and James Weymys in Eckford, all accused of the same crime, is declared to be forfeited. On the awards, Walter Scott of Synton, and Walter Chisholme of Chisholme, and William Scott of Haden, became bound, jointly and severally, that Sir Peter Cranstoun, and his kindred and servants, should receive no injury from them in future. . . . It is said that, upon this rising, the Kirk of St Mary's was burned by the Scotts.

NOTE 40, Page 28.—"*He marked the crane on the Baron's crest.*"

The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic Border motto—*Thou shall want ere I want.*

NOTE 41, Page 30.—"*Like a book-bosomed priest should ride.*"

"At Unthank, two miles N.E. from the church of Ewes, there are the ruins of a chapel for divine service, in time of popery. There is a tradition that friars were wont to come from Melrose or Jedburgh to baptize and marry in this parish; and, from being in use to carry the mass-book in their bosoms, they were called by the inhabitants, *Book-a-bosoms.*"

NOTE 42, Page 30.—"*It had much of glamour might.*"

Glamour, in the legends of Scottish superstition, means the magic power of imposing on the eyesight of spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality. To such a charm the ballad of "Johnnie Fa" imputes the fascinations of the lovely Countess, who eloped with that gipsy leader:—

"Sae soon as they saw her weel faur'd face,
They cast the glamour ower her."

It was formerly used even in war. In 1381, when the states of Anjou lay before a strong castle, upon the coast of Naples, a necromancer offered to "make the ayre so thicke, that they within shal thynke that there is a great bridge on the sea."

The art of glamour, or ocular fascination, was anciently a principal part of the skill of the jongleur, or juggler, whose tricks formed much of the amusement of a Gothic castle. Some writer upon Dæmonology, tells us of a person who was very desirous to establish a connection with the invisible world; and, failing in all his conjurations, began to entertain doubts of the existence of spirits. While this thought was passing through his mind, he received, from an unseen hand, a very violent blow. He had immediately recourse to his magical arts, but was unsuccessful in evoking the spirit, who had made his existence so sensibly felt. A learned priest told him, long after, that the being who had so chastised his incredulity would be the first whom he should see after his death.

NOTE 43, Page 31.—"*The running stream dissolved the spell.*"

It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay, if you interpose a brook betwixt you and spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burn's inimitable *Tam o' Shanter* turns entirely upon such a circumstance. The belief seems to be of antiquity. Brompton informs us, that certain Irish wizards could, by spells, convert clods, or stones, into fat pigs, which they sold in the market; but which always reassumed their proper form, when driven by the deceived purchaser across a running stream. But Brompton is severe on the Irish, for a very good reason,—"*Gens ista spurcissima non solveret decimas.*"

NOTE 44, Page 33.—"*His buckler, scarce in breadth a span.*"

Imitated from Drayton's account of Robin Hood and his followers. To wound an antagonist in the thigh or leg was reckoned contrary to the law of arms.

NOTE 45, Page 35.—"*And with a charm she stanch'd the blood.*"

See several charms for this purpose, in REGINALD SCOTT'S *DISCOVERY OF WITCHCRAFT*, p. 273.

NOTE 46, Page 35.—"*But she has ta'en the broken lance.*"

Sir Kenelm Digby, in a discourse upon the cure by sympathy, pronounced at Montpellier, before an assembly of nobles and learned men, relates how King James VI. obtained from Sir Kenelm the discovery of his secret, which he pretended had been taught him by a Carmelite friar, who had learned it in Armenia or Persia. Let not the age of animal magnetism and metallic tractors smile at the sympathetic powder of Sir Kenelm Digby. I presume that the success ascribed to the sympathetic mode of treatment might arise from the pains bestowed in washing the wound, and excluding the air, thus bringing on a cure by the first intention.

NOTE 47, Page 36.—"*On Penchryst glows a bale of fire.*"

The Border beacons, from their number and position, formed a sort of telegraphic communication with Edinburgh. The Act of Parliament, 1455, c. 48, directs that one bale or fagot shall be warning of the approach of the English in any manner; two bales, that they are *coming indeed*; four bales, blazing beside each other, that the enemy are in great force. "The same taikenings to be watched and maid at Eggarhope Castel, fra they se the fire of Hume, that they fire richt sune. And, in like manner, on Sowtra edge, sall se the fire of Eggarhope Castel, and make taikening in like manner. And then may all Lowthiane be warned, and in special the Castel of Edinburgh; and their four fires to be maid in like manner, that they in Fife, and fra Striviling east, and the west part of Lowthiane, and to Dunbar, all may se them, and come to the defense of the realme." These beacons (at least in later times) were "a long and strong tree, set up with a long iron pole across the head of it, and an iron brander fixed on a stalk, in the middle of it, for holding a tar-barrel."—STEVENSON, Vol. II., p. 701.

NOTE 48, Page 36.—"*Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise.*"

The speed with which the Borders collected great bodies of horsemen may be judged from the following extract, when the subject of the rising was much less important than that supposed in the romance. It is taken from Carey's *Memoirs*:—"Upon the death of the old Lord Scroope, the queen gave the west wardenry to his son, that had married my sister. He, having received that office, came to me with great earnestness, and desired me to be his deputy, affirming me that I should live within his house; and that he would allow me half-a-dozen men, and as many horses, to be kept at his charge; and his fee being 1000 merks yearly,

he would part it with me, and I should have the half. . . . We had a stirring time of it; and few days passed over my head but I was on horseback, either to prevent mischief, or to take malefactors, and to bring the Border in better quiet than it had been in times past. . . . I had private intelligence given me that there were two Scottish men that had killed a churchman in Scotland, and were by one of the Græmes relieved. This Græme dwelt within five miles of Carlisle. He had a pretty house, and close to it a strong tower, for his own defence in time of need. About two o'clock in the morning I took horse in Carlisle, and not above 25 in my company, thinking to surprise the house on a sudden. Before I could surround the house, the two Scotts were gotten in the strong tower, and I could see a boy riding from the house as fast as his horse could carry him. Little suspecting what it meant, Thomas Carleton said to me, 'Do you see that boy that rideth away so fast? He will be in Scotland within this half-hour; and if he is gone to let them know, that you are here, and to what end you are come, and the small number you have with you; and that of this will make haste, on a sudden they may surprise us, and do with us what they please.' Hereupon we took advice what was best to be done. We sent notice presently to all parts to raise the country, and to come to us with all the speed they could; and withal we sent to Carlisle to raise the townsmen, for without foot we could do no good against the tower. There we stood some hours, expecting more company; and within a short time after the country came in on all sides, so that we were quickly between three and four hundred horse; and after some longer stay, the foot of Carlisle came to us, to the number of three or four hundred men, whom we set presently at work to get up to the top of the tower, and to remove the roof; and then some twenty of them to fall down together, and by that means to ruin the tower. The Scotts seeing their present danger, offered to parley, and yield up themselves to my survey. They had no sooner opened the iron gate, and yielded themselves my prisoners, but we might see four hundred horse within a quarter of a mile coming to their rescue, and to surprise me and my small company; but of a sudden they stayed, and stood at gaze. These had more to do than ever, for all our Borderers came crying with full mouths, 'Sir, give us leave to set upon them; for these are those that have killed our fathers, our brothers, and uncles, and our cousins; and they are come, thinking to surprise you, upon weak grass nags, such as they could get on a sudden; and God hath put them into our hands, that we may take revenge of them for much blood that they have spilt of ours.' I desired they would be patient awhile, and bethought myself, if I should give them their will, there would be few or none of the Scots that would escape unkill'd (there were so many deadly feuds among them). They were ill satisfied with any answer, but durst not disobey. I sent with speed to the Scots, and bade them pack away with all the speed they could; for, if they stayed the messenger's return, they should few of them return to their own homes. They made no stay. Thank God's mercy I escaped a great danger; and, by my means, there were a great many men's lives saved that day."

NOTE 49, Page 37.—"*On many a cairn's grey pyramid.*"

The cairns, or piles, of loose stone, which crown the summit of most of our Scottish hills, and are found in other remarkable situations, seem usually, though not universally, to have been sepulchral monuments. Six flat stones are commonly found in the earth, forming a cavity of greater or smaller dimensions, in which an urn is often placed. The author is possessed of one discovered beneath an immense cairn at Roughlee, in Liddesdale. It is of the most barbarous construction; the middle of the substance alone having been subjected to the fire, over which, when hardened, the artist had laid an inner and outer coat of unbaked clay, etched with some very rude ornaments; his skill, apparently, being inadequate to baking the vase when completely finished. The contents were bones and ashes, and a quantity of beads made of coal. This seems to have been a barbarous imitation of the Roman fashion of sepulture.

NOTE 50, Page 39.—"*Great Dundee.*"

The Viscount of Dundee, slain in the battle of Killiecrankie.

NOTE 51, Page 39.—"*For pathless marsh, and mountain cell.*"

The morasses were the usual refuge of the Border herdsmen, on the approach of an English army. Caves hewed in the most dangerous and inaccessible places also afforded an occasional retreat. Such caverns may be seen in the precipitous banks of the Teviot at Sunlaws and Ancram, upon the Jed at Hundalee, and in many other places upon the Borders. The banks of the Esk at Gorton and Hawthornden are hollowed into similar recesses. But even these dreary dens were not always secure places of concealment. "In the way as we came, not far from this place (Long Niddry), George Ferrers, a gentleman of my Lord Protector's,

happened upon a cave in the ground, the mouth whereof was so worne with the fote-prints of steps, that he seemed to be certaihe thear wear some folke within; and gone downe to trie, he was redily receyved with a hakebut or two. He left them not yet, till he had knowen whyther thei would be content to yelde and cum out, whiche thy fondly refusyng, gat licanse to deale with them as he coulde; and so returned to them with a skore or two of pioners. Three ventes had their cave that we wear ware of, whereof he first stopt up on; another he fil'd ful of strawe, and set it a fyer, whereat they within cast water apace; but it was so well maynteyened without, that the fyer prevayled, and thei within fayn to get them belike into anoother parler. Then devised we (for I hapt to be with him) to stop the same up, whoich, we should eyther smother them, or find out their ventes, if thei hadde any moe; as this was doon at another issue, about a xii score of, we moughte see the fume of their smoke to come out; the which continued with so great a force, and so long a while, that we could not but think this must needs get them out, or smother withip; and, forasmuch as we found not that they dyd the tane, we thought it for certain thei wear sure of the toother."—PATTEN'S ACCOUNT OF SOMERSET'S EXPEDITION, *apud* "DALZIEL'S FRAGMENTS."

NOTE 52, Page 39.—"*Southern ravage.*"

From the following fragment of a letter from the Earl of Northumberland to King Henry VIII., preserved among the Cotton MSS., Calig., B. VII., 179, the reader may estimate the nature of the dreadful war which was occasionally waged upon the Borders, sharpened by mutual cruelties, and the personal motives of the wardens or leaders. "Some Scottish barons," says the earl, "had threatened to come within thre miles of my pore house of Werkworthe, wher I lye, and gif me light to put on my clothes at mydnight; and also the said Marke Carr said there opynly, that seying they had a governor on the marches of Scotland, as well as they haid in England, he shulde hope your highnes' instructions, gyffen unto your garyson, for making of any day-forey; for he and his friends wolde burne enough on the nyght, lettyng your counsaill here defyne a notable acte at theyre pleasures. Upon which, in your highnes' name, I commandet dewe watche to be kepte on your marchiss, for comyng in of any Scotts. Neutheless, upon Thursday at nyght last, come thyrty light horsemen into a litell village of myne, called Whittell, having not past six howses, lying toward Rhyddisdail, upon Shilbottallmore, and ther wolde have fyred the said howses, but ther were noo fyer to get ther, and they forgate to brynge any withe theyme, and toke a wyf, being great with chlyde, in the said towne, and said to hyr, wher we cau not gyve the lard lyght, yet we shall doo this in spyte of hym; and gave hyr iii mortall wounds upon the heid, and another in the right side, with a dagger: wheruppon the said royg is dede, and the childe in hyr bely is loste. Beseeching your most gracious highness to reduce unto your gracious memory this wylfull and shamefull murder, done within this your highnes' realme, notwithstanding all the inhabitants therabout rose into the said fray, and gave warnyng by beacons unto the countrey afore theyme, and yet the Scottsman dyde escape. And uppon certyne knowledge to my brother Clyfforthe and me, had by credable persons of Scotland, this abomynable act not only to be done by Dyverse of the Mershe, but also the afore named persons of Tyvidail, and consented to, as by appearance, by the Erle of Murey, upon Friday at nyght last, let slyp c of the best horsemen of Glendaill, with a part of your highnes' subjects of Berwyke, together with George Dowglass, whoo came into Inghland agayne, in the dawning of the day; but afore theyre retorne, they dyd mar the Erle of Murrie's provishins at Coldingham, for they dyd not only burne the said towne of Coldingham, with all the corne thereunto belonging, which is esteemed worthe cii marke sterling; but also burned two townes nye adioning thereto, called Branerdergest and the Black Hill, and toke xxiii persons, lx horse, with cc hed of cataill, whiche nowe, as I am informed, hathe not only bene a staye of the said Erle of Murrie's not comyng to the Borders as yet, but alsoo, that none inlande men will adventure theyre selfs uppon the marches. And as for the tax that shoulde have bene grantyd for fynding of the said iii hundred oxen, is denied. Upon whiche the king of Scotland departed from Edynburgh to Stirling, and as yet ther doth remayn. And alsoo I, by the advice of my brother Clyfforthe, have devysed that within this iii nyghts, Godde wylling, Kelsey, in lyke case, shall be burnt, with all the corne in the said towne; and then they shall have noo place to lye any garysonin, nygh unto the Borders. And as I shall attaigne further knowledge, I shall not fail to satisfye your highness, according to my most bounden dutie. And for this burnyng of Kelsey is devysed to be done secretly, by Tyndaill and Ryddisdaille. And thus the holy Trynite and . . . of our most royal estate, with long lyf and in moche increase of honour as your most noble heart can desire.—*At Werkworthe the xxxiith day of October (1522).*"

NOTE 53, Page 39.—“*Wat Tinlinn.*”

This person was, in my younger days, the theme of many a fireside tale. He was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held, for his Border service, a small tower on the frontier of Liddesdale. Wat was by profession a *sutor*, but, by inclination and practice, an archer and warrior. Upon one occasion the Captain of Bewcastle, military governor of that wild district of Cumberland, is said to have made an incursion into Scotland, in which he was defeated, and forced to fly. Wat Tinlinn pursued him closely through a dangerous morass. The Captain, however, gained the firm ground; and seeing Tinlinn dismounted, and floundering in the bog, used these words of insult, “Sutor Wat, ye cannot sew your boots; the heels *risp* (creak) and the seams *rive* (tear).” “If I cannot sew,” retorted Tinlinn, discharging a shaft which nailed the Captain’s thigh to his saddle; “if I cannot sew, I can *yerk*” (*to twitch, as shoemakers, sewing the stitches of their work*).

NOTE 54, Page 39.—“*Billhope stag.*”

There is an old rhyme, which thus celebrates the places in Liddesdale remarkable for game—

“Billhope braes for bucks and raes,
And Carit Hawhs for swine,
And Tarras for the good bull-trout,
If he be ta’en in time.”

The bucks and roes, as well as the wild swine, are now extinct; but the bull-trout is still famous.

NOTE 55, Page 40.—“*Of silver brooch and bracelet proud.*”

As the Borderers were indifferent about the furniture of their habitations, so much exposed to be burned and plundered, they were proportionately anxious to display splendour in decorating and ornamenting their females.

NOTE 56, Page 40.—“*Belted Will Howard.*”

Lord William Howard, third son of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, succeeded to Naworth Castle, and a large domain annexed to it, in right of his wife Elizabeth, sister of George, Lord Dacre, who died, without heirs male, in the 11th of Queen Elizabeth. By a poetical anachronism, he is introduced into the romance a few years earlier than he actually flourished. He was warden of the western marches; and, from the rigour with which he repressed the Border excesses, the name of Belted Will Howard is still famous in our traditions. In the Castle of Naworth; his apartments, containing a bed-room, oratory, and library, are still shown. They impress us with an unpleasing idea of the life of a lord warden of the marches. Three or four strong doors separating those rooms from the rest of the castle, indicated apprehensions of treachery from his garrison; and the secret winding passages through which he could privately descend into the guard-room, or even into the dungeons, imply the necessity of no small degree of secret superintendence on the part of the governor. As the ancient books and furniture have remained undisturbed, the venerable appearance of these apartments, and the armour scattered around the chamber, almost lead us to expect the arrival of the warden in person. Naworth Castle is situated near Brampton, in Cumberland. Lord William Howard was ancestor of the Earls of Carlisle.

NOTE 57, Page 40.—“*Lord Dacre.*”

The well-known name of Dacre is derived from the exploits of one of their ancestors at the siege of Acre, or Ptolomais, under Richard Cœur de Lion. There were two powerful branches of that name. The first family, called Dacres of the South, held the castle of the same name, and were ancestors to the present Lord Dacre. The other family, descended from the same stock, were called Lord Dacres of the North, and were barons of Gilsland and Greystocks. A chieftain of the latter branch was warden of the west marches during the reign of Edward VI. He was a man of a hot and obstinate character, as appears from some particulars of Lord Surrey’s letter to Henry VIII., giving an account of his behaviour at the siege and storming of Jedburgh.

NOTE 58, Page 40.—“*The German hackbut-men.*”

In the wars with Scotland, Henry VIII. and his successors employed numerous bands of mercenary troops. At the battle of Pinky, there were in the English army six hundred hackbutter on foot, and two hundred on horseback, composed chiefly of foreigners. On the 27th September, 1549, the Duke of Somerset, Lord Protector, writes to the Lord Dacre, warden of the west marches:—“The Almainy,

in number two thousand very valiant soldiers, shall be sent to you shortly from Newcastle." . . . From the battle-pieces of the ancient Flemish painters, we learn that the low country and German soldiers marched to an assault with their right knees bared. And we may also observe, in such pictures, the extravagance to which they carried the fashion of ornamenting their dress with knots of ribbon.

NOTE 59, Page 41.—"*His ready lances Thirlestane brave.*"

Sir John Scott of Thirlestane flourished in the reign of James V., and possessed the estates of Thirlestane, Gamescleugh, lying upon the river Ettrick, and extending to St Mary's Loch, at the head of Yarrow. When James V. had assembled his nobility, and their feudal followers, at Fala, with the purpose of invading England, and was, as is well known, disappointed by the obstinate refusal of his peers, this baron alone declared himself ready to follow the king wherever he should lead. In memory of his fidelity, James granted to his family a charter of arms, entitling them to have a border of *fleurs-de-luce*, similar to the tressure in the royal arms, with a bundle of spears, for the crest; motto, *Ready, aye Ready*. . . . The following is an accurate transcript from the original, in the possession of the Right Hon. Lord Napier, the representative of John of Thirlestane:—

"JAMES REX.

"We, James, be the grace of God King of Scottis, considerand the ffaith and guid servis of of of (*so in original*) right traist freind, John Scott of Thirlestane, quha cummand to our hoste at Soutra Edge, with three score and ten lanncieres on horseback of his friands and followers, and beand willing to gang with we into England, when all our nobles and others refused, he was readdy to stake all at our bidding: ffor the quhilk cause, it is our will, and we dae straitlie command and charg our lion herauld, and his deputis for the time beand, to give and to granet to the said John Scott, ane Border of ffeure de lises about his coatte of armes, sik as is on our royal banner, and alsoa ane bundell of lannces above his helmet, with the words, Readdy, ay Readdy, that he and his aftercoumers may bruik the sauim, as a pledge and taiken of our guid will and kyndness for his treue worthiness; and ther our letter seen, ye nae wayes failzie to doe. Given at Fala Muire, and en our hand and privy casket, the xxvii day of Jully, one and xxxxii zaires. By the King's grace speciall ordinance.—JO. ARSKINE."

NOTE 60, Page 41.—"*An aged Knight, to danger steeled.*"

The family of Harden are descended from a younger son of the Laird of Buccleuch, who flourished before the estate of Murdieston was acquired by the marrying of one of those chieftains with the heiress in 1296. Hence they bear the cognizance of the Scotts upon the field; whereas, those of the Buccleuch are disposed upon a bend dexter, assumed in consequence of that marriage. Walter Scott of Harden, who flourished during the reign of Queen Mary, was a renowned free-booter, concerning whom a variety of anecdotes are told. The bugle-horn, said to have been used by this formidable leader, is preserved by his descendant, the present Mr Scott of Harden. His castle was situated upon the very brink of a dark and precipitous dell, through which a scanty rivulet steals to meet the Borthwick. In the recess of this glen he is said to have kept his spoil, which served for the daily maintenance of his retainers, until the production of a pair of clean spurs, in a covered dish, announced to the hungry band that they must ride for a supply of provisions. He was married to Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope, and called in song the Flower of Yarrow. He possessed a very extensive estate, which was divided among his five sons. There are numerous descendants of this old marauding baron—the Poet was one of them.

NOTE 61, Page 45.—"*The camp their home, their law the sword.*"

The mercenary adventurers, whom, in 1380, the Earl of Cambridge carried to the assistance of the King of Portugal, against the Spaniards, mutinied for want of pay. At an assembly of their leaders, Sir John Soltier, a natural son of Edward the Black Prince, thus addressed them:—"I counsayle, let us be alle of one alliance, and of one accorde, and let us among ourselves reyse up the baner of St George, and let us be frendes to God, and enemyes to alle the worlde; for without we make ourselfe to be feared, we gette nothyng." "By my sayth," quod Sir William Helmon, "ye saye ryght well, and so lette us do." "Than they reysed up the penon of St George, and cried, 'A Soltier! a Soltier! the valayent bastarde! frendes to God, and enemies to alle the worlde!'"—FROYSART, Vol. I., ch. 393.

NOTE 62, Page 47.—"*A gauntlet on a spear.*"

A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when any one broke his word, to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting. This ceremony was much dreaded.

NOTE 63, Page 48.—“*That he may suffer march-treason pain.*”

Several species of offences, peculiar to the Border, constituted what was called march-treason. Among others was the crime of riding, or causing to ride, against the opposite country during the time of truce. Thus, in an indenture made at the water of Eske, beside Salom, the 25th of March, 1384, betwixt noble Lords and mighty, Sirs Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and Archibald of Douglas, Lord of Galloway, a truce is agreed upon until the 1st day of July; and it is expressly accorded, “Gif ony stellis aithir on the ta part, or on the tothyr, that he will be hengit or heofdit; and gif ony company stellis any gudeȝ within the triex beforsayd, ane of that company shall be hengit or heofdit, and the remanent sall restore the gudys stollon in the double.”—HISTORY OF WESTMORELAND, INTRODUCTION, p. 39.

NOTE 64, Page 48.—“*William of Deloraine.*”

In dubious cases, the innocence of Border criminals was occasionally referred to their own oaths. The form of executing bills or indictments, by Border oaths, runs thus: “You shall swear by heaven above you, hell beneath you, by your part of Paradise, by all that God made in six days and seven nights, and by God himself, you are depart out sackless of art, part, say, writting, ridd, blaming, having, or recetting of any of the goods and cattels named in this bill. So help you God.”—HISTORY OF CUMBERLAND, INTRODUCTION, p. 25.

NOTE 65, Page 48.—“*Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword.*”

The dignity of knighthood, according to the original tradition, had this peculiarity, that it did not flow from the monarch, but could be conferred by one who himself possessed it, upon any squire who, after due probation, was found to merit the honour of chivalry. Latterly, this power was confined to generals, who were wont to create knights' bannerets after or before an engagement. Even so late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Essex highly offended his jealous sovereign by the indiscriminate exercise of this privilege—but probably the latest instance of knighthood, conferred by a subject, was in the case of Thomas Ker, knighted by the Earl of Huntly, after the defeat of the Earl of Argyle in the battle of Benrinnes. This fact is attested.

NOTE 66, Page 48.—“*When English blood swelled Ancram's ford.*”

The battle of Ancram Moor, or Peniel-head, was fought A.D. 1545. The English, commanded by Sir Ralph Evers and Sir Brian Latoun, were totally routed, and both their leaders slain in the action. The Scottish army was commanded by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, assisted by the Laird of Buccleuch and Norman Leslie.

NOTE 67, Page 50.—“*The blanche lion.*”

This was the cognizance of the noble house of Howard in all its branches. The crest, or bearing, of a warrior was often used as a *nomme de guerre*. Thus Richard III. acquired his well-known epithet, the *Boar of York*.

NOTE 68, Page 50.—“*Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine.*”

It may easily be supposed that trial by single combat, so peculiar to the feudal system, was common on the Borders. The following indenture will show at how late a period it was there resorted to, as a proof of guilt or innocence:—“It is agreed between Thomas Musgrave and Lancelot Carleton, for the true trial of such controversies as are betwixt them, to have it openly tried, by way of combat, before God and the face of the world, to try it in Canonby-holme, before England and Scotland, upon Thursday, in Easter-week, being the eight day of April next ensuing, A.D. 1602, betwixt nine of the clock, and one of the same day, to fight on foot, to be armed with jack, steel cap, plaite sleeves, plaite breeches, plaite sockes, two baslaerd swords, the blades to be one yard and half a quarter of length, two Scotch daggers or dirks at their girdles, and either of them to provide armour and weapons for themselves according to this indenture. Two gentlemen to be appointed on the field to aid both the parties, to see that they both be equal in arms and weapons, according to their indenture; and being so viewed by the gentlemen, the gentlemen to ride to the rest of the company, and to leave them but two boys by the gentlemen, to be under 16 years of age, to hold their horses.”

The grounds of the quarrel—1. “Lancelot Carleton did charge Thomas Musgrave that he had offered to deliver her majesty's Castle of Bewcastle to the King of Scots.” 2. “Thomas Musgrave hath so neglected his duty, that the castle was by him made a den of thieves, and an harbour and receipt for murderers, felons, and all sorts of misdemeanors.” 3. “He chargeth him, that his office of Bewcastle is open for the Scotch to ride in and through, and small resistance made by him to the contrary.” “I, Thomas Musgrave, doth deny all this charge.”

NOTE 69, Page 51.—*"He, the jovial harper."*

The person here alluded to is one of our ancient Border minstrels, called Rattling, Roaring Willie. This *soubriquet* was probably derived from his bullying disposition; being, it would seem, such a roaring boy as is frequently mentioned in old plays. While drinking at Newtull upon Teviot, about five miles above Hawick, Willie chanced to quarrel with one of his own profession, who was usually distinguished by the odd name of Sweet Milk, from a place on Rule Water, so called. They retired to a meadow on the opposite side of the Teviot, to decide the contest with their swords, and Sweet Milk was killed on the spot. A thorn tree marks the scene of the murder, which is still called Sweet Milk Thorn. Willie was taken and executed at Jedburgh, bequeathing his name to the beautiful Scottish air of "Rattling, Roaring Willie."

NOTE 70, Page 51.—*"Black Lord Archibald's battle-later."*

The title to the most ancient collection of it remembered, that on the 18th day of I assembled the whole lords, freeholders, and had, at the college of Lindisden; and then bodily to be sworn as the Holy Gospel test their doing, should decree, discern, deliver statutes, ordinances, and uses of marches, th of Douglas's days, and Archibald his son's came again to him advisedly with these st time of warfare before. The said Earl V decreed and delivered by the said lords and ful and profitable to the Borderers, the whi warfare, he took, and the whole lords and B that they should maintain and supply him, upon those that should break the statutes p lians, and lords, and eldest Borderers, made warfare to be used, which were no treason his time, and in all time coming."

NOTE 71, Page 54.—*"The Bloody Heart blazed in the sun."*

The chief of this potent race of heroes, about the date of the poem, was Archibald Douglas, seventh Earl of Angus, a man of great courage and activity. The bloody heart was the well-known cognizance of the house of Douglas, assumed from the time of Good Lord James, to whose care Robert Bruce committed his heart to be carried to the Holy Land.

NOTE 72, Page 54.—*"And shouting still, 'A Home! a Home!'"*

The Earls of Home, as descendants of the Dunbars, ancient Earls of March, carried a lion rampant, argent; but, as a difference, changed the colour of the shield from gules to vert, in allusion to Greenlaw, their ancient possession. The slogan or war-cry of this powerful family was, "A Home! a Home!" It was anciently placed in an escroll above the crest. The helmet is armed with a lion's head erased gules, with a cap of state gules, turned up ermine.

The Hepburns, a powerful family in East Lothian, were usually in close alliance with the Homes. The chief of this clan was Hepburn, Lord of Haddo—a family which terminated in the too famous Earl of Bothwell.

NOTE 73, Page 55.—*"Pursued the foot-ball play."*

The foot-ball was anciently a very favourite sport all through Scotland, but especially upon the Borders. Sir John Carmichael of Carmichael, warden of the middle marches, was killed in 1600 by a band of the Armstrongs returning from a foot-ball match. Sir Robert Carey, in his memoirs, mentions a great meeting appointed by the Scottish riders, to be held at Kelso, for the purpose of playing at foot-ball, but which terminated in an incursion upon England. At present the foot ball is often played by the inhabitants of adjacent parishes, or of the opposite banks of a stream. The victory is contested with the utmost fury, and very serious accidents have sometimes taken place in the struggle.

NOTE 74, Page 56.—*"Twixt truce and war, such sudden change."*

Notwithstanding the constant wars upon the Borders, and the occasional cruelties which marked the mutual inroads, the inhabitants on either side do not appear to have regarded each other with that violent and personal animosity which might have been expected. On the contrary, like the outpost of hostile armies, they often carried on something resembling friendly intercourse, even in

the middle of hostilities; and it is evident from various ordinances against traduced intermarriages between English and Scottish Borderers, that the government of both countries were jealous of their cherishing too intimate a connection. Froissart says of both nations that "Englishmen on the one party, and Scots on the other party, are good men of war; for when they meet there is a hard fight without sparynge. There is no troo (truce) between them as long as spears, swords, axes, or daggers, will endure, but lay on eche upon other; and when they be well beaten, and that the one partye hath obtaynd the victory, they then gloryse so in theyre dedes of armes, and are so joyfull, that such as be taken they shall be ransomed, or that they go out of the felde; so that shortly eche of them is so content with other, that at their departyng, curtyslye, they will say, God thank you."—BERNERS' FROYSSART, Vol. II., p. 163.

The Border meetings of truce, which, although places of merchandize and merriment, often witnessed the most bloody scenes, may serve to illustrate the description in the text. They are vividly portrayed in the old ballad of the Reidsquaire. Both parties came armed to a meeting of the warders, yet they intermixed fearlessly and peaceably with each other in mutual sports and familiar intercourse, until a casual fight arose—

"Then was there nought but bow and spear,
And every man pulled out a brand."

NOTE 75, Page 56.—"*Give the shrill watchword of their clan.*"

"As we wear then a settling and the tents a setting up, among all things else commendable in our hole journey, and this seemed to me an intollerable disorder and abuse, that whearas allways, both in all townes of war, and in all campes of armies, quetnes and stilnes, without nois, is principally in the night, after the watch is set, observe (I nede not reason why) our northern prikkers, the Borderers, notwithstanding, with great endmitie (as thoght we, and not unlyke to be playn) unto a northerly hounde howling in a hie way when he hath lost him he waited upon, some hoopynge, some whistling, and most with crying, A Berwyke, A Berwyke, A Fenwyke, A Fenwyke, A Bulmer, A Bulmer! or so otherwise as theyr captains' names wear, never bsi'de these troublous and dangerous weysis all the night longe. It is a feat of war, in mine opinion, that myht right well be left out."—PATTEN *apud* DALZIEL, p. 75.

NOTE 76, Page 64.—"*Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way.*"

The pursuit of Border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends, with blood-hounds and bugle-horn, and was called the *hot-trod*. He was entitled, if his dog could trace the scent, to follow the invaders into the opposite kingdom; a privilege which often occasioned bloodshed. In addition to what has been said of the blood-hound, I may add that the breed was kept up by the Buccleuch family on their Border estates till within the eighteenth century. A person was alive in the memory of many, who remembered a blood-hound being kept at Eldinhope, in Ettrick Forest, for whose maintenance the tenant had an allowance of meal. At that time the sheep were always watched at night. Upon one occasion, when the duty had fallen on the narrator, then a lad, he became exhausted with fatigue, and fell asleep upon a bank near sunrise. Suddenly he was awakened by the tread of horses, and saw five men, well mounted and armed, ride briskly over the edge of the hill. They stopped and looked at the flock; but the day was too far broken to admit the chance of their carrying any of them off. One of them, in spite, leaped from his horse, and, coming to the shepherd, seized him by the belt he wore round his waist, pulled it till it broke, and carried it away with him. They rode off at the gallop; and the shepherd, giving the alarm, the blood-hound was turned out, and the people in the neighbourhood alarmed. The marauders escaped.

NOTE 77, Page 67.—"*She wrought not by forbidden spell.*"

Popular belief, though contrary to the doctrines of the church, made a favourable distinction betwixt magicians, and necromancers, or wizards; the former were supposed to command evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or at least to be in league and compact with those enemies of mankind. The art of subjecting their demons were manifold; sometimes the fiends were actually swindled by the magicians, as in the case of the bargain betwixt one of their number and the poet Virgil.

NOTE 78, Page 67.—"*A merlin sat upon her wrist.*"

A merlin, or sparrow-hawk, was usually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, the constant attendant of a knight or baron. Godscroft

relates that, when Mary of Lorraine was regent, she pressed the Earl of Angus to admit a royal garrison into his Castle of Tantallon. To this he returned no direct answer; but, as if apostrophising a gos-hawk which sat on his wrist, and which he was feeding during the Queen's speech, he exclaimed, "The devil's in this greedy glede, she will never be full." Barclay complains of the indecent practice of bringing hawks and hounds into churches.

NOTE 79, Page 68.—"*And princely peacock's gilded train.*"

The peacock, it is well known, was considered, during the times of chivalry, not merely as an exquisite delicacy, but as a dish of peculiar solemnity. After being roasted, it was again decorated with its plumage, and a sponge, dipt in lighted spirits of wine, was placed in its bill. When it was introduced on days of grand festival, it was the signal for the adventurous knights to take upon them vows to do some deed of chivalry before "the peacock and ladies."

NOTE 80, Page 68.—"*And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave.*"

The boar's head was also a usual dish of feudal splendour. In Scotland it was sometimes surrounded with little banners, displaying the colours and achievements of the baron at whose board it was served.

NOTE 81, Page 68.—"*And cygnet from St Mary's wave.*"

There are often flights of wild swans upon St Mary's Lake, at the head of the river Yarrow.

NOTE 82, Page 68.—"*Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill.*"

The Rutherfords of Hunthill were an ancient race of Border lairds, whose names occur in history, sometimes in defending the frontier against the English, sometimes in disturbing the peace of the country. Dickon Draw-the-sword was the son of the ancient warrior, called in tradition the Cock of Hunthill.

NOTE 83, Page 69.—"*But bit his glove and shook his head.*"

To bite the thumb, or the glove, seems not to have been considered upon the Border as a gesture of contempt, though so used by Shakespeare, but as a pledge of mortal revenge. It is yet remembered that a gay gentleman of Teviotdale, on the morning after a hard drinking bout, observed that he had bitten his glove. He instantly demanded of his companion, with whom he had quarrelled, and hearing that he had had words with one of the party, insisted on instant satisfaction, asserting, that though he remembered nothing of the dispute, yet he never would have bit his glove, unless he had received some unpardonable insult. He fell in the duel, which was fought near Selkirk, in 1721.

NOTE 84, Page 69.—"*Arthur Fire-the-Braes.*"

The person bearing this redoubtable *nomme de guerre*, was an Elliot, and resided at Thorleshope, in Liddesdale. He occurs in the list of Border riders in 1597.

NOTE 85, Page 69.—"*Since old Buccleuch the name did gain.*"

A tradition, preserved by Scott of Satchells, who published, in 1680, *A true History of the Right Honourable Name of Scott*, gives the following romantic origin of that name:—Two brethren, natives of Galloway, having been banished from that country for a riot or insurrection, came to Rankelburn, in Ettrick Forest, when the keeper, whose name was Brydone, received them joyfully, on account of their skill in winding the horn, and in the other mysteries of the chase. Kenneth MacAlpine, then King of Scotland, came soon after to hunt in the royal forest, and pursued a buck, from Ettrick-heugh to the glen, now called Buckleugh, about two miles above the junction of Rankelburn with the river Ettrick. Here the stag stood at bay; and the king and his attendants, who followed on horse-back, were thrown out by the steepness of the hill and the morass. John, one of the brethren from Galloway, had followed the chase on foot, and now coming in, seized the buck by the horns, and being a man of great strength and activity, threw him on his back, and ran with this burden about a mile up the steep hill to a place called Cracra-Cross, where Kenneth had halted, and laid the buck at his sovereign's feet.

"The deer being carried in that place,
At his majesty's demand—

And Galloway John he wot;
He said, 'Thy name now after this
Shall ever be called John Scott.'

And for the buck thou stoutly brought
To us up that steep heugh,
Thy designation ever shall
Be John Scott of Buckleugh."

The Buccleuch arms bear *Or* upon a bend azure, a mullet betwixt two crescents in the field; in addition to which they formerly bore in the field a hunting-horn. . . . The supporters, now two ladies, were formerly a hound and buck, on, according to the old terms, a *hart of leash*, and a *hart of grace*. The motto now given is *Amo*, applying to the family supporters. It is said the old motto was, *Best riding by moonlight*, in allusion to the crescents on the shield, and perhaps to the habits of those who bore it.

NOTE 86, Page 70.—"*Old Albert Graeme.*"

"John Graham, second son of Malice, Earl of Monteth, commonly surnamed *John with the bright sword*, upon some displeasure rising against him at court, retired with many of his clan and kindred into the English Borders in the reign of King Henry IV., where they seated themselves, and many of their posterity have continued there ever since. . . . "They were all stark moss-troopers and arrant thieves: both to England and Scotland outlawed; yet sometimes connived at, because they gave intelligence furth of Scotland, and would rise 100 horse at any time upon a raid of the English into Scotland." . . . As both wardens accounted them the proper subjects of their own prince, neither was induced to demand reparation for their excesses from the opposite officer, which would have been an acknowledgment of his jurisdiction over them. The Debateable Land was finally divided betwixt England and Scotland by commissioners appointed by both nations.

NOTE 87, Page 71.—"*Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?*"

The gallant and unfortunate Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was unquestionably the most accomplished cavalier of his time; and his sonnets display beauties which would do honour to a more polished age. He was beheaded on Towerhill in 1546; a victim to the mean jealousy of Henry VIII., who could not bear so brilliant a character near his throne. The song of the supposed bard is founded on an incident said to have happened to the earl in his travels. Cornelius Agrippa, the celebrated alchemist, showed him, in a looking-glass, the lovely Geraldine, to whose service he had devoted his pen and his sword. The vision represented her as indisposed, and reclined upon a couch, reading her lover's verses by the light of a waxen taper.

NOTE 88, Page 73.—"*Where erst St Clairs held princely sway.*"

The St Clairs are of Norman extraction, being descended from William de St Clair, second son of Walderme Compté de St Clair, and Margaret, daughter to Richard, Duke of Normandy. He was called, for his fair deportment, the seemly St Clair; and, settling in Scotland during the reign of Malcolm Ceanmore, obtained large grants of land in Mid-Lothian. These domains were increased by the liberality of succeeding monarchs, and comprehend the baronies of Roslin, Pentland, Cowsland, Cardaine, and several others. It is said a large addition was obtained from Robert Bruce, when that king, in following the chase upon the Pentland hills, had often started a "white faunch deer," which had always escaped from his ties; and he asked the nobles whether any of them had, which they thought might be more successful. Lord William of St Clair said he would wager his head that his two favourite dogs, "Help" and "Hold," would kill the deer before she could cross the March-burn. The king betted the forest of Pentland-moor against the life of Sir William St Clair. All the hounds were tied up, except a few ratches, or slow hounds, to put up the deer; while Sir William St Clair, posting himself in the best situation for slipping his dogs, prayed devoutly to Christ, the blessed Virgin, and St Katherine. The deer was shortly after roused, and the hounds slipped, Sir William following on a gallant steed to cheer his dogs. The hind, however, reached the middle of the brook, upon which the hunter threw himself from his horse in despair. At this critical moment, however, Hold stopped him in the brook; and Help coming up, turned her back, and killed her on Sir William's side. The king, descending from the hill, embraced Sir William, and bestowed on him

the lands of Kirkton, Loganhouse, Earnraig, etc., in free forestry. Sir William, in acknowledgment of St Katherine's intercession, built the Chapel of St Katherine in the Hopes, the churchyard of which is still to be seen. In Roslin Chapel, the tomb of Sir William St Clair is still to be seen, on which he appears sculptured in armour, with a greyhound at his feet; tradition declaring that the knight had shouted,—“Help, haud, an ye may, or Rosline will lose his head this day.”

NOTE 89, Page 73.—“*Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall.*” *

The Castle of Kirkwall was built by the St Clairs while Earls of Orkney. It was dismantled by the Earl of Caithness about 1615, having been garrisoned against the government by Robert Stewart, natural son of the Earl of Orkney. Of its ruins, John, Master of St Clair, writes in 1715—“I had occasion to entertain myself at Kirkwall with the melancholic prospect of the ruins of an old castle, the seat of the old Earls of Orkney, my ancestors; and of a more melancholic reflection, of so great and noble an estate, on the Orkney and Shetland Isles, being taken from one of them by James the Third for faultrie, after his brother Alexander, Duke of Albany, had married a daughter of my familie. In the veins of our familie ran the blood of Robert Bruce, as fresh as in his own; for their title to the crowne was by a daughter of David Bruce, son to Robert; and our alliance was by marrying a grandchild of the same Robert Bruce, and daughter to the sister of the same David, out of the familie of Douglas, which at that time did not much sullie the blood, more than my ancestors, having not long before had the honour of marrying a King of Denmark's, who was named Florentine, and has left, in the tower of Kirkwall a noble monument of the grandeur of the time, the finest church ever I saw entire in Scotland. . . . My father was the onlie man of the Scot's nation who had courage enough to protest in Parliament against King William's title to the throne, which was lost, God knows how. . . . Could I be blamed for making some bitter reflections to myself, and laughing at the extravagance and unaccountable humour of men, and the singularitie of my own case (an exile for the cause of the Stuart familie), when I ought to have known that the greatest crime I, or my familie, could have committed, was persevering, to my own destruction, in serving the royal familie faithfully, though obstinatie, after so great a share of depression, and after they had been pleased to doom me and my familie to starve.”—MSS. MEMOIRS OF JOHN, MASTER OF ST CLAIR.

NOTE 90, Page 74.—“*Their barks the dragons of the wave.*”

The chiefs of the *Vikings*, or Scandinavian pirates, assumed the title of *Seckonunger*, or Sea King's Ships; in the inflated language of the Scalds, they are often termed the serpents of the ocean.

NOTE 91, Page 74.—“*Of that Sea-snake, tremendous curled.*”

The *Jormungandr*, or snake of the ocean, whose folds surround the earth, is one of the wildest fictions of the Edda. It was nearly caught by the god Thor, who went to fish for it with a bull's head. In the battle betwixt the evil demons and the divinities of Odin, which is to precede the *Ragnarock*, or Twilight of the gods, this snake is to act a conspicuous part.

NOTE 92, Page 74.—“*Those dread Maids, whose hideous yell.*”

Those were the Valkyriur, or Selectors of the slain, despatched by Odin, from Valhalla, to choose those who were to die, and to distribute the contest. They are well known to the English reader as Gray's Fatal Sisters.

NOTE 93, Page 74.—“*Their falchions wrenched from corpses' hold.*”

The northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms, and their other treasures. Thus, Angantyr, before commencing the duel in which he has stipulated that, if he fell, his sword Tyrning should be buried with him. His daughter,

* [“We have now got to Kirkwall, and needs I must stare
When I think that in verse I have once call'd it fair;

'Tis a base little borough, both dirty and mean,—

There is nothing to hear, and there's nought to be seen,
Save a church, where, of old times, a prelate harangued,

And a palace that's built by an earl that was hang'd.”

—*W. Scott's Epistle in Verse to the Duke of Buccleuch.*

Aug. 13, 1814.]

Hervor, afterwards took it from his tomb. The dialogue which passed betwixt her and Angantyr's spirit on this occasion has been often translated; indeed, the ghosts of the northern warriors were not wont tamely to suffer their tombs to be plundered.

NOTE 94, Page 74.—"*Rosabelle.*"

This was a family name in the house of St Clair. Henry St Clair, the second of the line, married Rosabelle, fourth daughter of the Earl of Stratherne.

NOTE 95, Page 74.—"*Castle Ravensheuch.*"

A large and strong castle, now ruinous, situated betwixt Kirkcaldy and Dysart, on a steep crag, washed by the Frith of Forth. It was conferred on William St Clair, as a slight compensation for the earldom of Orkney, by a charter of James III., dated in 1471. It was long a principal residence of the barons of Roslin.

NOTE 96, Page 75.—"*Seemed all on fire that chapel proud.*"

The beautiful chapel of Roslin is still in tolerable preservation. It was founded in 1446 by William St Clair, Prince of Orkney, Duke of Oldenbourg, Earl of Caithness and Stratherne, Lord St Clair, Lord Niddesdale, Lord Admiral of the Scottish Seas, Lord Justice of Scotland, Lord Warden of the Three Marches, Baron of Roslin, Pentland, Pentland-moor, etc., Knight of the Cockle, and of the Garter (as is affirmed.) This lofty person built the castle of Roslin, where he resided in princely splendour, and founded the chapel, which is in the most rich and florid state of architecture. Among the profuse carvings on the pillars and buttresses, the rose is frequently introduced in allusion to the name, with which, however, the flower has no connection; the etymology being *Ross-linnhe*, the promontory of the lin, or water-fall. The chapel is said to appear on fire previous to the death of any of his descendants. The barons of Roslin were buried in a vault beneath the chapel floor.

NOTE 97, Page 77.—"*Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.*"

The ancient castle of Peel Town, in the Isle of Man, is surrounded by four churches, now ruinous. Through one of these chapels there was formerly a passage from the guard-room of the garrison. This was closed, it is said, upon the following occasion:—"They say that an apparition, called, in the Mankish language, the *Mouthie Doog*, in the shape of a large black spaniel, with curled, shaggy hair, was used to haunt Peel Castle. . . . One night a fellow (soldier) being drunk, snatched up the keys to carry them to the captain, by the passage by which the *Mouthie doog* was always seen to come out of. . . . A great noise was heard, but as loud and noisily as the adventurer had been at his leaving his companions, he had, on his return, become sober and silent enough, for he was never heard to speak more. Nothing intelligible could be got out of him, but dying within three days, by the distortion of his limbs and features, it might be guessed that he died in agonies more than is common in a natural death."—WALDRON'S ISLE OF MAN, p. 107.

NOTE 98, Page 77.—"*Did to St Bride of Douglas make.*"

This was a favourite saint of the house of Douglas, and of the Earl of Angus in particular, as we learn from the following passage:—"The Queen Regent had proposed to raise a rival noble to the ducal dignity; and discussing of her purpose with Angus, he answered, "Why not, madam? we are happy that have such a princess, that can know and will acknowledge men's service, and is willing to recompense it. But, by the might of God (this was his oath when he was serious and in anger; at other times, it was by Saint Bryde of Douglas), if he be a Duke, I will be a *Drake* (*Scottice—the male duck*)!" So she desisted from prosecuting her purpose.—GODSCROFT, Vol. II., p. 131.

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

Page 81.—*Battle of Ancram Moor.*

Lord Evers, and *Sir Brian Latoun*, during the year 1544, committed the most dreadful ravages upon the Scottish frontiers, compelling most of the inhabitants, and especially the men of Liddesdale, to take assurance under the King of England. Upon the 17th November, in that year, the sum total of their depredations stood thus in the bloody ledger of *Lord Evers*:—

Towns, towers, barnekynes, paryshe churches, bastill houses, burned and destroyed,	192
Scots slain,	403
Prisoners taken,	816
Nolt (cattle),	10,386
Shepe,	12,492
Nags and geldings,	1296
Gayt,	200
Bolls of corn,	850
Insight gear, etc. (furniture), an incalculable quantity.	

—*Murdin's State Papers*, Vol. I., p. 51.

The King of England had promised these two barons a feudal grant of the country which they had thus reduced to a desert; upon hearing which, *Archibald Douglas*, the seventh Earl of Angus, swore to write the deed of investiture upon their skins, with sharp pens and bloody ink, in resentment for their having defaced the tombs of his ancestors, at Melrose.—*GODSCROFT*. In 1545, *Lord Evers* and *Latoun* again entered Scotland, with an army consisting of 3,000 mercenaries, 1,500 English Borderers, and 700 assured Scottish men, chiefly *Armstrongs*, *Turnbulls*, and other broken clans. In this second incursion, the English Generals even exceeded their former cruelty. *Evers* burned the tower of Broomhouse, with its lady (a noble and aged woman, says *LESLY*), and her whole family. The English penetrated as far as Melrose, which they had destroyed last year, and which they now again pillaged. As they returned towards Jedburgh, they were followed by Angus, at the head of 1,000 horse, who was shortly after joined by the famous *Norman Lesly*, with a body of Fife-men. The English, being probably unwilling to cross the Teviot, while the Scots hung upon their rear, halted upon Ancram Moor, above the village of that name; and the Scottish General was deliberating whether to advance or retire, when *Sir Walter Scott* of Buccleuch came up, at full speed, with a small but chosen body of his retainers, the rest of whom were near at hand. By the advice of this experienced warrior (to whose conduct *PITSCOTTIE* ascribes the success of the engagement), *Angus* withdrew from the height which he occupied, and drew up his forces behind it, upon a piece of low flat ground, called Panier-heugh, or Peniel-heugh. The spare horses, being sent to an eminence in their rear, appeared to the English to be the main body of the Scots in the act of flight. Under this persuasion, *Evers* and *Latoun* hurried precipitately forwards, and, having ascended the hill which their foes had abandoned, were no less dismayed than astonished to find the phalanx of Scottish spearmen drawn up, in firm array, upon the flat ground below. The Scots, in their turn, became the assailants. A heron, roused from the marshes by the tumult, soared away betwixt the encountering armies. "Oh," exclaimed *Angus*, "that I had here my white goss-hawk, that we might all yoke at once."—*GODSCROFT*. The English, breathless and fatigued, having the setting sun and wind full in their faces, were unable to withstand the resolute and desperate charge of the Scottish lines. No sooner had they begun to waver, than their own allies, the assured Borderers, who had been waiting the event, threw aside their red crosses, and, joining their countrymen, made a most merciless slaughter among the English fugitives, the pursuers calling upon each other to remember Broomhouse.—*LESLY*, p. 478. In the battle fell *Lord Evers* and his son, together with *Sir Brian Latoun*, and 800 Englishmen, many of whom were persons of rank. A thousand prisoners were taken. Among these was a patriotic *Alderman of London*, *READ* by name, who, having contumaciously refused to pay

his portion of a benevolence demanded from the city by Henry VIII., was sent, by royal authority, to war against the Scotts. These, at settling his ransom, he found still more exorbitant in their exaction than the monarch.—REDPATH'S BORDER HISTORY, p. 553. *Evers* was much regretted by *King Henry*, who swore to avenge his death upon *Angus*, against whom he conceived himself to have particular grounds of resentment, on account of favours received by the Earl at his hands. The answer of *Angus* was worthy of a *Douglas*:—"Is our brother-in-law^{*} offended," said he, "that I, as a good Scotsman, have avenged my ravaged country, and the defaced tombs of my ancestors upon *Ralph Evers*? They were better men than he, and I was bound to do no less—and will he take my life for that? Little knows *King Henry* the skirts of Cairn-table.† I can keep myself there against all the English host."—GONSCROFT.

The spot on which the noted battle of Ancram Moor was fought is called Lyliard's Edge, from an Amazonian Scottish woman of that name, who is reported, by tradition, to have distinguished herself in the same manner as *Squire Witherington*, at Otterbourne. The old people point out her monument, now broken and defaced. The inscription is said to have ran as follows:—

"Fair maiden Lillyard lies under this stone,
Little was her stature, but great was her fame;
Upon the English louns she laid mony thumps,
And, when her legs were cutted off, she fought upon her stumps."

THE GRAY BROTHER.

Note 1, Page 89.—"*By blast of bugle free.*"

The barony of Pennycuik, the property of Sir George Clark, Bart., is held by a singular tenure,—the proprietor being bound to sit upon a large rocky fragment, called the Buck-stane, and wind three blasts of a horn, when the king shall come to hunt on the Borough Muir, near Edinburgh. Hence, the family have adopted, as their crest, a demi-forester proper, winding a horn, with the motto, *Free for a blast*. The beautiful mansion-house of Pennycuik is much admired, both on account of the architecture and surrounding scenery.

Note 2, Page 89.—"*To Auchendinny's hazel glade.*"

Auchendinny, situated upon the Esk, below Pennycuik, the present (?) residence of the ingenious H. Mackenzie, Esq., author of *The Man of Feeling*, etc.

Note 3, Page 89.—"*Who knows not Melville's beechy grove?*"

Melville Castle, the seat (?) of the Hon. Robert Dundas, is delightfully situated on the Esk, near Lasswade, and gives title of viscount to the family of Dundas.

Note 4, Page 89.—"*And Roslin's rocky glen.*"

The ruins of Roslin Castle, the baronial residence of the ancient family of St Clair,—the Gothic chapel, which is still in beautiful preservation, with the romantic and woody dell in which they are situated.

Note 5, Page 89.—"*Dalkeith, which all the virtues love.*"

The village and castle of Dalkeith belonged, of old, to the famous Earl of Morton, but is now the residence of the noble family of Buccleuch. The parish extends along the Esk, which is there joined by its sister stream of the same name.

Note 6, Page 89.—"*And classic Hawthornden.*"

Hawthornden, the residence of the poet Drummond. A house of more modern date is enclosed, as it were, by the ruins of the ancient castle, and overhangs a tremendous precipice upon the banks of the Esk, perforated by winding caves, which, in former times, formed a refuge to the oppressed patriots of Scotland. There Drummond received Ben Johnson, who journeyed from London, on foot, to visit him.

^{*} *Angus had married the widow of James IV., sister to Henry VIII.*

† *A mountain westward of Douglas, and above Muirkirk.*

CADYOW CASTLE.

Note 1, Page 99.—“*First of his troop, the Chief rode on.*”

The head of the family of Hamilton at this period was James, Earl of Arran, Duke of Chatelherault in France, and first peer of the Scottish realm. In 1569 he was appointed, by Queen Mary, her Lieutenant-general in Scotland, under the singular title of her adopted father.

Note 2, Page 100.—“*Stern Claud replied, with darkening face.*”

Lord Claud Hamilton, second son of the Duke of Chatelherault, and commendator of the Abbey of Paisley, acted a distinguished part during the troubles of Queen Mary's reign, and remained unalterably attached to the cause of that unfortunate princess. He led the van of her army at the fatal battle of Langside, and was one of the commanders at the raid of Stirling, which had so nearly given complete success to the queen's cause. He was ancestor of the present Marquis of Abercorn.

Note 3, Page 100.—“*Few suns have set since Woodhouselee.*”

The barony, stretching along the banks of the Esk, near Auchendinny, belonged to Bothwellhaugh, in right of his wife. The ruins of the mansion, from whence she was expelled in the brutal manner which occasioned her death, are still to be seen in a hollow glen beside the river. Popular report tenants them with the restless ghost of Lady Bothwellhaugh; whom, however, it confounds with Lady Anne Bothwell, whose lament is so popular. This spectre is so tenacious of her rights, that—a part of the stones of the ancient edifice having been employed in building or repairing the present Woodhouselee—she has deemed it a part of her privilege to haunt that house also; and, even of very late years, has excited considerable disturbance and terror among the domestics. This is a more remarkable vindication of the *rights of ghosts*, as the present Woodhouselee is situated on the slope of the Pentland hills, distant, at least, four miles from her proper abode. She always appears in white, and with her child in her arms.

Note 4, Page 100.—“*Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke.*”

Birrell informs us that Bothwellhaugh, being closely pursued, “After that spur and wand had failed him, he drew forth his dagger, and strocke his horse behind, which caused the horse to leap a verey brode stanke (*i.e.*, ditch), by whilk means he escaipit, and got away from all the rest of the horses.”—BIRRELL'S DIARY, p. 18.

Note 5, Page 101.—“*From the wild Border's humbled side.*”

Murray's death took place shortly after an expedition to the Borders, where—

“Nae thief durst stir, they did him feir so sair,—
 . . . Mycht the rasch-bus keep ky on the bordour.”

Note 6, Page 101.—“*With hackbut bent, my secret stand.*”

The carbine with which the regent was shot, is preserved at Hamilton Palace. It is a brass piece, of a middling length, very small in the bore, and, what is rather extraordinary, appears to have been rifled or indented in the barrel. It had a match-lock, for which a modern fire-lock has been injudiciously substituted.

Note 7, Page 101.—“*Dark Morton, girt with many a spear.*”

Of this noted person it is enough to say, that he was active in the murder of David Rizzio, and at least privy to that of Darnley.

Note 8, Page 101.—“*The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.*”

This clan of Lennox Highlanders was attached to the Regent Murray. Hollingshed, speaking of the battle of Langside, says,—“In this batayle the valancie of an Hieland gentleman, named Macfarlane, stood the regent's part in great steede; for, in the hottest brunte of the fighte, he came up with two hundred of his friendes and countrymen, and so manfully gane in upon the flankes of the queen's people, that he was a great cause of the disordering of them. This Macfarlane had been lately before, as I have heard, condemned to die, for some outrage by him committed, and obtayning pardon through suyte of the Countesse of Murry, he recompenced that clemencie by this piece of service seen at this batayle.” Calderwood states, that “Macfarlane, with his Highlandmen, fled from the wing where they were set. The Lord Lindsay, who stood nearest to them in the regent's battle, said, ‘Let them go; I shall fill their place better!’ and so, stepping forward with a company of fresh men, charged the enemy (whose spears were now spent), with long weapons, so that they were driven by force, being before almost overthrown by the avant-guard and harquebusiers, and so were turned to flight.”—CALDERWOOD'S MSS., *apud* KEITH, p. 480. Melville mentions the flight of the vanguard, but states it to have been commanded by Morton, and composed chiefly of commoners of the barony of Renfrew.

Note 9, Page 101.—“*Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh.*”

The Earl of Glencairn was a steady adherent of the regent's. George Douglas of Parkhead was a natural brother of the Earl of Morton, whose horse was killed by the same ball by which Murray fell.

Note 10, Page 101.—“*Saw fair Mary weep in vain.*”

Lord Lindsay of the Byres was the most ferocious and brutal of the regent's faction; and, as such, was employed to extort Mary's signature to the deed of resignation, presented to her in Loch-Leven Castle. He discharged his commission with the most savage rigour; and it is even said, when the weeping captive, in the act of signing, averted her eyes from the fatal deed, he pinched her arm with the grasp of his iron glove.

Note 11, Page 101.—“*So close the minions crowded nigh.*”

“Not only had the regent notice of the intended attempt upon his life, but even of the very house from which it was threatened. With that infatuation, at which men wonder, after such events have happened, he deemed it a sufficient precaution to ride briskly past the dangerous spot. But even this was prevented by the crowd, so that Bothwellhaugh had time to take a deliberate aim.”—SPORTISWOODE, 233, BUCHANAN.

MARMION

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

LINLITHGOW PALACE

MARMION:

A Tale of Flodden Field.

IN SIX CANTOS.

*Alas! that Scottish maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell!
That Scottish Bard should wake the string,
The triumph of her foes to tell!*

—LEYDEN.

WITH NOTES.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY LORD MONTAGUE,

&c., &c., &c.,

THIS ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

CANTO FIRST, - - -	THE CASTLE.
CANTO SECOND, - - -	THE CONVENT.
CANTO THIRD, - - -	THE HOSTEL, OR INN.
CANTO FOURTH, - - -	THE CAMP.
CANTO FIFTH, - - -	THE COURT.
CANTO SIXTH, - - -	THE BATTLE.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is hardly to be expected that an Author, whom the Public have honoured with some degree of applause, should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of MARMION must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September, 1513.

ASHESTIEL, 1808.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears;
 He looks abroad and soon appears,
 O'er Horncliff-hill a plump* of spears.
 Beneath a pennon gay;
 A horseman, darting from the crowd,
 Like lightning from a summer cloud,
 Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
 Before the dark array.
 Beneath the sable palisade,
 That closed the Castle barricade,
 His bugle-horn he blew;
 The warder hasted from the wall,
 And warn'd the Captain in the hall,
 For well the blast he knew;
 And joyfully that knight did call,
 To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV.

"Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
 Bring pasties of the doe,
 And quickly make the entrance free,
 And bid my heralds ready be,
 And every minstrel sound his glee,
 And all our trumpets blow;
 And, from the platform, spare ye not
 To fire a noble solvo-shot;
 Lord MARMION waits below!"
 Then to the Castle's lower ward
 Sped forty yeomen tall,
 The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,
 Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
 The lofty palisade unsparr'd,
 And let the drawbridge fall.

V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
 Proudly his red-roan charger trode,
 His helm hung at the saddle-bow;
 Well by his visage you might know
 He was a stalwart knight, and keen,
 And had in many a battle been.
 The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd
 A token true of Bosworth field;

* This word properly applies to a flight of water-fowl; but is applied, by analogy, to a body of horse:—

"There is a knight of the North Country,
 Which leads a lusty *plump* of spears."

—*Flodden Field.*

His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,
Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick mustache, and curly hair,
Coal black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age;
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb,
Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.

VI.

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel;⁸
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd;
Amid the plumage of the crest,
A falcon hover'd on her nest,
With wings outspread, and forward breast;
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soar'd sable in an azure field;
The golden legend bore aright,
~~Who~~ checks at me, to death is dight.
Blue was the charger's broider'd rein;
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires;
They burn'd the gilded spurs to claim;
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love-ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle-axe:
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along,
And ampling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.

The last and truest of the four,
 On high his lucky pennon bore;
 Like swan's tail in shape and hue,
 Finer'd the streamer glossy blue,
 Whence banner'd noble as before,
 The answering bloom seem'd to war
 With rosy western, two and two,
 In hue black, and jetlike blue,
 With banners wonder'd on each breast,
 Attending at their lord's behest:
 Each chosen for an other good,
 Knew humming-moth by lake or wood;
 Each was a stinger how could bend,
 And for a scorpion which could send;
 Each was a bear-spear rough and strong,
 And at their heels their quivers rung,
 Their insect yellows and away,
 Show'd they had march'd a weary way.

IX

The next that I should see you saw,
 For many an I, and order'd how,
 The soldiers of the guard,
 In musket, pike, and morion,
 Beside noble Marmion,
 Stood in the Castle-yard;
 Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
 The runner held his linstock yare,
 For welcome shot prepared:
 Order'd the train, and such a clang,
 As then through all his turrets rang,
 Old Norham never heard.

X

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
 The trumpets flourish'd brave,
 The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
 And thundering welcome gave.
 Blithe salute, in martial sort,
 The minstrels well might sound,
 Or, as Lord Marmion cross'd the court,
 He scatter'd angels round.
 Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
 Stout heart, and open hand!
 'Ere dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
 Thou flower of English land!"

XI

For pursuivants, whom tabards deck,
 With silver scutcheon round their neck,

Stood on the steps of stone,
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
They hail'd Lord Marmion:
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town;
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks weight,
All as he lighted down.
"Now, largesse, largesse, Lord Marmion,⁶
Knight of the crest of gold!
A blazon'd shield in battle won,
Ne'er guarded heart so bold."

XII.

They marshall'd him to the Castle-hall,
Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourish'd the trumpet-call,
And the heralds loudly cried,—
"Room, lordlings, room for Lord Marmion,
With the crest and helm of gold!
Full well we know the trophies won
In the lists at Cottiswold:
There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
To him he lost his lady-love,
And to the King his land.
Ourselves beheld the listed field,
A sight both sad and fair;
We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,⁶
And saw his saddle bare;
We saw the victor win the crest
He wears with worthy pride;
And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
His foeman's scutcheon tied.
Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
Room, room, ye gentles gay,
For him who conquer'd in the right,
Marmion of Fontenaye!"

XIII.

Then stepp'd, to meet that Noble Lord,
Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
Baron of Twisell and of Ford,
And Captain of the Hold.
He led Lord Marmion to the dais,
Raised o'er the pavement high,
And placed him in the upper place—
They feasted full and high:

The whiles a Northern harper rude
 Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,⁷
*"How the fierce Thirwalls, and Riddleys all,
 Stout Willimondswick,
 And Hardriding Dick,
 And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
 Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
 And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw."*
 Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
 The harper's barbarous lay;
 Yet much he praised the pains he took,
 And well those pains did pay:
 For lady's suit and minstrel's strain,
 By Knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV.

"Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says
 "Of your fair courtesy,
 I pray you bide some little space,
 In this poor tower with me.
 Here may you keep your arms from rust,
 May breathe your war-horse well;
 Seldom hath pass'd a week but guest
 Or feat of arms befell;
 The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
 And love to couch a spear;—
 St George! a stirring life they lead,
 That have such neighbours near.
 Then stay with us a little space,
 Our northern wars to learn;
 I pray you for your lady's grace!"—
 Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.

The Captain mark'd his alter'd look,
 And gave a squire the sign;
 A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
 And crown'd it high in wine.
 "Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion:
 But first I pray thee fair,
 Where hast thou left that page of thine,
 That used to serve thy cup of wine.
 Whose beauty was so rare?
 When last in Raby towers we met,
 The boy I closely eyed,
 And often mark'd his cheeks were wet,
 With tears he fain would hide:

His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed;
But meeter seem'd for lady fair,
To fan her cheek or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead:
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom—when he sigh'd,
The russet doublet's rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!
Say, has thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady's bower?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour?

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest;
He roll'd his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppress'd,
Yet made a calm reply:
"That boy thou thought'st so goodly fair,
He might not brook the northern air,
More of his fate, if thou would'st learn,
I left him sick in Lindisfarne:
Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
Or has that dame so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage?"—
He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whisper'd light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII.

Unmark'd, at least unreck'd, the taunt,
Careless the knight replied,
"No bird, whose feathers gaily flaunt;
Delights in cage to bide:
Norham is grim and grated close,
Hemm'd in by battlement and fosse,
And many a darksome tower;
And better loves my lady bright
To sit in liberty and light,
In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
We hold our greyhound in our hand,
Our falcon on our glove;
But where shall we find leash or band,
For dame that loves to rove?
Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
She'll stoop when she has tired her wing."—

XVIII.

“Nay, if with royal James’s bride
The lovely Lady Heron bide,
Behold me here a messenger,
Your tender greetings prompt to bear;
For, to the Scottish court address’d,
I journey at our King’s behest.
And pray you, of your grace, provide
For me and mine, a trusty guide.
I have not ridden in Scotland since
James back’d the cause of that mock prince,
Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,⁸
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
Then did I march with Surrey’s power,
What time we razed old Aytoun Tower.”—

XIX.

“For such-like need, my lord, I trow,
Norham can find you guides enow;
For here be some have prick’d as far,
On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar;
Have drunk the monks of St Bothan’s ale,
And driven the beeves of Lauderdale;⁹
Harried the wives of Greenlaw’s goods,
And given them light to set their hoods.”

XX.

“Now, in good sooth,” Lord Marmion cried,
“Were I in warlike wise to ride,
A better guard I would not lack,
Than your stout forayers at my back;
But, as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know,
Why through all Scotland, near and far,
Their King is mustering troops for war,
The sight of plundering Border spears,
Might justify suspicious fears,
And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
Break out in some unseemly broil:
A herald were my fitting guide;
Or friar, sworn in peace to bide;
Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
Or strolling pilgrim, at the least.”

XXI.

The Captain mused a little space,
And pass’d his hand across his face.—
“Fain would I find the guide you want,
But ill may spare a pursuivant,

The only men that safe can ride
Mine errands on the Scottish side :
And though a bishop built this fort,
Few holy brethren here resort;
Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
Since our last siege we have not seen:
The mass he might not sing or say,
Upon one stinted meal a-day;
So safe he sat in Durham aisle,
And pray'd for our success the while.
Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
Is all too well in case to ride;
The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein ¹⁰
The wildest war-horse in your train;
But then, no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
Friar John of Tillmouth were the man:
A blithesome brother at the can,
A welcome guest in hall and tower,
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
But that good man, as ill befalls,
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since on the vigil of St Bede,
In evil hour, he cross'd the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed.
Old Bughtrig found him with his wife;
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans frock and hood; fled for his life.
The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
That, if again he venture o'er,
He shall shrieve penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know;
Yet, in your guard, perchance will go."

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word.—
"Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John.
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach;
Full well at tables can he play,
And sweep at bowls the stake away.
None can a lustier carol bawl,
The needfulest among us all,
When time hangs heavy in the hall,

The scallop-shell his cap did deck;
The crucifix around his neck
Was from Loretto brought
His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statlier step withal,
Or look'd more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye look'd haggard wild:
Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair;
Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
"But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St Andrews bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,¹⁴
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;

Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,¹⁵
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore:
Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more!

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drained it merrily;
Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
Though Selby press'd him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er;
It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle nought was heard,
But the slow footstep of the guard,
Pacing his sober round.

XXXI.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose
And first the chapel doors unclosed;
Then, after morning rites were done,
(A hasty mass from Friar John),
And knight and squire had broke their fast,
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse:
Then came the stirrup-cup in course:
Between the Baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
That noble train, their Lord the last.
'Then loudly rung the trumpet call;
Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore.
Around the castle eddied slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar;
Till they roll'd forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

CANTO SECOND.

The Convent.

I.

THE breeze, which swept away the smoke,
Round Norham Castle roll'd,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash, and thunder stroke,
As Marmion left the Hold.
It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where from high Whitby's cloister'd pile,
Bound to St Cuthbert's Holy Isle,¹
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight;
For, on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to greenwood shades,
Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view,
Their wonderment engage.
One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite;
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray;
Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog nigh,
His round black head, and sparkling eye,
Rear'd o'er the foaming spray;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disorder'd by the summer gale,

Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy;
Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turn'd arm and slender waist.
Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

III.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love, to her ear, was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall:
The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
Was of monastic rule the breach;
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower,
To raise the convent's eastern tower;
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She deck'd the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems emboss'd.
The poor her convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school;
Here cheek was pale, her form was spare;
Vigils and penitence austere,
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth;
Though vain of her religious sway,
She lov'd to see her maids obey;
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame;
Summon'd to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold

A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict.
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair;
As yet a novice unprofess'd,
Lovely and gentle, but distress'd.
She was betroth'd to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land:
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,
Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom.

VI.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seem'd to mark the waves below;
Nay, seem'd so fixed her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
Far other scene her thoughts recall,—
A sun-scorch'd desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves, nor breezes, murmur'd there;
There saw she, where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heap'd the sand;
To hide it till the jackals come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb:—
See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven!

VII.

Lovely, and gentle, and distress'd—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast;
Harpers have sung, and poets told
That he, in fury uncontroll'd,
The shaggy monarch of the wood;
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame:
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl and knife
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prison'd in Outhbert's islet grey.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They pass'd the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
To the good Saint who own'd the cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
And next they cross'd themselves to hear,
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look'd grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle with its battled walls,
The ancient Monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frown'd,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,

Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley'd walk
To emulate in stone.

On the deep walls the heathen Dane
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilt in a later style,
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulder'd in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drown'd amid the breakers' roar,
According chorus rose:
Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim,
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rush'd emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And bless'd them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made:
All through the holy dome,

Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,
The stranger sisters roam:
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid; for, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
How to their house three Barons bold¹⁷
Must menial service do;
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry, "Fye upon your name!
In wrath, for loss of silvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."—
"This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While labouring on our harbour-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear."—
They told, how in their convent-cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled.¹⁸
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone,¹⁹
When holy Hilda pray'd;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found.
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail,
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place of old.²⁰
How oft their patron changed, they told;
How, when the rude Dane burn'd their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.

They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose;
For, wondrous tale to tell!
In his stone-coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides,
Downward to Tilmouth cell.
Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair;
Chester-le-Street, and Ripon, saw
His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw
Hail'd him with joy and fear;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last,
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear:
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
His relics are in secret laid;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare!
Even Scotland's dauntless king, and heit,
(Although with them they led
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale),
Before his standard fled.
'Twas he to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back again,
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn
If, on a rock, by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name:
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deaden'd clang,—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard when gathering storm
And night was closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
 Far different was the scene of woe,
 Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
 Council was held of life and death.
 It was more dark and lone that vault,
 Than the worst dungeon cell:
 Old Colwulf built it, for his fault,^a
 In penitence to dwell,
 When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
 The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
 This den which, chilling every sense
 Of feeling, hearing, sight,
 Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,
 Excluding air and light,
 Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
 A place of burial for such dead,
 As, having died in mortal sin,
 Might not be laid the church within.
 'Twas now a place of punishment;
 Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
 As reach'd the upper air,
 The hearers bless'd themselves, and said,
 The spirits of the sinful dead
 Bemoan'd their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
 Did of this penitential aisle
 Some vague tradition go,
 Few only, save the Abbot, knew
 Where the place lay; and still more few
 Were those, who had from him the clew
 To that dread vault to go.
 Victim and executioner
 Were blindfold when transported there.
 In low dark rounds the arches hung,
 From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
 The grave stones rudely sculptured o'er,
 Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
 Were all the pavement of the floor;
 The mildew drops fell one by one,
 With tinkling splash upon the stone.
 A cresset,* in an iron chain,
 Which served to light this drear domain,
 With damp and darkness seemed to strive,
 As if it scarce might keep alive;
 And yet it dimly served to show
 The awful conclave met below.

* Antique chandelier.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three:
All servants of Saint Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown
By the pale cresset's ray:
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
She closely drew her veil:
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,²²
And she with awe looks pale:
And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
Has long been quenched by age's night,
Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace is shown,
Whose look is hard and stern,—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;
For sanctity call'd, through the isle,
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.
Her sex a page's dress belied;
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
But, at the Prioress' command,
A monk undid the silken band,
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread,
In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverley they know,
Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,
Whom the church numbered with the dead,
For broken vows, and convent fled

XXI.

When thus her face was given to view,
 (Although so palid was her hue,
 It did a ghastly contrast bear
 To those bright ringlets glistening fair.)
 Her look composed, and steady eye,
 Bespoke a matchless constancy;
 And there she stood so calm and pale,
 That, but her breathing did not fail,
 And motion slight of eye and head,
 And of her bosom, warranted
 That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
 You might have thought a form of wax,
 Wrought to the very life, was there;
 So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
 Such as does murder for a meed;
 Who, but of fear, knows no control,
 Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
 Feels not the import of his deed;
 One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
 Beyond his own mere brute desires.
 Such tools the tempter ever needs,
 To do the savagest of deeds;
 For them no vision'd terrors daunt,
 Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,
 One fear with them, of all most base,
 The fear of death,—alone finds place.
 This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
 And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
 His body on the floor to dash,
 And crouch, like hound beneath the lash,
 While his mute partner, standing near,
 Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
 Well might her paleness terror speak!
 For there were seen in that dark wall,
 Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall;—
 Who enters at such grisly door,
 Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
 In each a slender meal was laid,
 Of roots, of water, and of bread:
 By each, in Benedictine dress,
 Two haggard monks stood motionless;
 Who, holding high a blazing torch,
 Show'd the grim entrance of the porch:

Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were display'd,
And building tools in order laid.

XXIV.

These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,
And with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired;
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove, by deep penance, to efface
Of some foul crime the stain;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still.
As either joy'd in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain,
If, in her cause, they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.
By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, nor knew not where.

XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom,
On those the wall was to enclose,²³
Alive, within the tomb;
But stopp'd, because that woful Maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd.
Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain;
Her accents might no utterance gain;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip;
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seem'd to hear a distant rill,—
'Twas ocean's swells and falls;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear
So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent a part
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak,
By Autumn's stormy sky;

And when her silence broke at length,
 Still as she spoke she gathered strength,
 And arm'd herself to bear.
 It was a fearful sight to see
 Such high resolve and constancy,
 In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.

"I speak not to implore your grace,
 Well know I, for one minute's space
 Successful might I sue:
 Nor do I speak your prayers to gain
 For if a death of lingering pain,
 To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
 Vain are your masses too.—
 I listen'd to a traitor's tale,
 I left the convent and the veil;
 For three long years I bow'd my pride,
 A horse-boy in his train to ride;
 And well my folly's meed he gave,
 Who forfeited, to be his slave,
 All here, and all beyond the grave.—
 He saw young Clara's face more fair,
 He knew her of broad lands the heir,
 Forgot his vows, his faith foreswore,
 And Constance was beloved no more.
 'Tis an old tale, and often told;
 But did my fate and wish agree,
 Ne'er had been read, in story old,
 Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
 That loved, or was avenged, like me.

XXVIII.

"The King approved his favourite's aim;
 In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
 Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
 For he attaints that rival's fame
 With treason's charge—and on they came,
 In mortal lists to fight.
 Their oaths are said,
 Their prayers are pray'd,
 Their lances in the rest are laid,
 They meet in mortal shock;
 And, hark! the throng, with thundering cry,
 Shout 'Marmion! Marmion! to the sky,
 De Wilton to the block!'
 Say ye, who preach Heaven shall decide
 When in the lists two champions ride,

Say, was Heaven's justice here?
 When, loyal in his love and faith,
 Wilton found overthrow or death,
 Beneath a traitor's spear?
 How false the charge, how true he fell,
 This guilty packet best can tell."—
 Then drew a packet from her breast,
 Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the rest.—

XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid;
 To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
 The hated match to shun.
 'Ho! shifts she thus?' king Henry cried;
 'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
 If she were sworn a nun.'
 One way remain'd—the King's command
 Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
 I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
 For Clara and for me:
 This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
 He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
 And, by his drugs, my rival fair
 A saint in heaven should be.
 But ill the dastard kept his oath,
 Whose cowardice has undone us both.

XXX.

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
 Not that remorse my bosom swells,
 But to assure my soul that none
 Shall ever wed with Marmion.
 Had fortune my last hope betray'd,
 This packet to the King convey'd,
 Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
 Although my heart that instant broke.—
 Now, men of death, work forth your will,
 For I can suffer, and be still;
 And come he slow, or come he fast,
 It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI.

"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
 Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
 If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
 Full soon such vengeance will he take,
 That you shall wish the fiery Dane
 Had rather been your guest again.
 Behind, a darker hour ascends!
 The altars quake, the crosier bends,

The ire of a despotic King
 Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
 Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
 Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
 Some traveller then shall find my bones
 Whitening amid disjointed stones,
 And ignorant of priests' cruelty,
 Marvel such relics here should be."

XXXII.

Fix'd was her look, and stern her air:
 Back from her shoulders stream'd her hair;
 The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
 Stared up erectly from her head;
 Her figure seem'd to rise more high;
 Her voice, despair's wild energy
 Had given a tone of prophecy.
 Appall'd the astonish'd conclave sate;
 With stupid eyes, the men of fate
 Gazed on the light inspired form,
 And listen'd for the avenging storm;
 The judges felt the victim's dread;
 No hand was mov'd, no word was said,
 Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
 Raising his sightless balls to heaven:—
 "Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
 Sinful brother, part in peace!" *
 From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
 Of execution too, and tomb,
 Paced forth the judges three;
 Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
 The butcher-work that there befell,
 When they had glided from the cell
 Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
 That conclave to the upper day;
 But, e'er they breathed the fresher air,
 They heard the shriekings of despair,
 And many a stifled groan:
 With speed their upward way they take,
 (Such speed as age and fear can make,)
 And cross'd themselves for terror's sake,
 As hurrying, tottering on:
 Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
 They seem'd to hear a dying groan,

* See Note 33, on Stanza XXV.

And bade the passing knell to toll
 For welfare of a parting soul.
 Flaw o'er the midnight wave it swung,
 Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
 To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd,
 His beads the wakeful hermit told,
 The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
 But slept e'er half a prayer he said;
 So far was heard the mighty knell,
 The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
 Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
 Listed before, aside, behind,
 Then couch'd him down beside the hind,
 And quaked among the mountain fern,
 To hear that sound so dull and stern.

CANTO THIRD.

The Hostel, or Inn.

I.

THE livelong day Lord Marmion rode:
 The mountain path the Palmer show'd,
 By glen and streamlet winded still,
 Where stunted birches hid the rill.
 They might not choose the lowland road,
 For the Merse forayers were abroad,
 Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
 Had scarcely fail'd to bar their way.
 Oft on the trampling band, from crown
 Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down;
 On wing of jet, from his repose
 In the deep heath, the black-cock rose;
 Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
 Nor waited for the bending bow;
 And when the stony path began,
 By which the naked peak they wan,
 Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
 The noon had long been pass'd before
 They gain'd the height of Lanunermoor;
 Thence winding down the northern way
 Before them, at the close of day,
 Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes,
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seem'd large, though rude,²⁴
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamour fills the hall:
Weighing the labour with the cost,
Tells everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you gaze;
Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
The rafters of the sooty roof
Bore wealth of winter cheer;
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savoury haunch of deer.
The chimney arch projected wide;
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand;
Nor wanted, in that martial day,
The implements of Scottish fray,
The buckler, lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle Marmion sate,
And view'd around the blazing hearth,
His followers mix in noisy mirth;
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

IV.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;

For though, with men of high degree,
 The proudest of the proud was he,
 Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
 To win the soldier's hardy heart.
 They love a captain to obey,
 Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May
 With open hand, and brow as free,
 Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
 Ever the first to scale a tower,
 As venturous in a lady's bower:—
 Such buxom chief shall lead his host
 From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
 Right opposite the Palmer stood;
 His thin dark visage seen but half,
 Half hidden by his hood.
 Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
 Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
 Strove by a frown to quell;
 But not for that, though more than once
 Full met their stern encountering glance,
 The Palmer's visage fell.

VI.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
 Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
 For still, as squire and archer stared
 On that dark face and matted beard,
 Their glee and game declined.
 All gazed at length in silence drear,
 Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
 Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
 Thus whisper'd forth his mind:—
 "Saint Mary! saw'st thou e'er such sight?
 How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
 Whene'er the fire-brand's fickle light
 Glances beneath his cowl!
 Full on our Lord he sets his eye;
 For his best palfrey, would not I
 Endure that sullen scowl."

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
 Which thus had quell'd their hearts, who saw
 The ever-varying fire-light show
 That figure stern and face of woe,
 Now call'd upon a squire:—
 "Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
 To speed the lingering night away?
 We slumber by the fire."—

VIII.

"So please you," thus the youth rejoin'd,
"Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
Ill may we hope to please your ear,
Accustom'd Constant's strains to hear.
The harp full deftly can he strike,
And wake the lover's lute alike;
To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,
No nightingale her love-lorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavish'd on rocks, and billows stern,
Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
Now must I venture, as I may
To sing his favourite roundelay."

IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
The air he chose was wild and sad;
Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
Rise from the busy harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer,
On Lowland plains, the ripen'd ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong.
Now a wild chorus swells the song:
Oft have I listen'd, and stood still,
As it came soften'd up the hill,
And deem'd it the lament of men
Who languish'd for their native glen;
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehana's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumber'd brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
Recall'd fair Scotland's hills again!

X.

Song.

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted for ever?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow,

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. Never, O never!

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap,
O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it,—
Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. Never, O never!

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound;
And silence sunk 'ōn all around.
The air was sad; but sadder still
It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plain'd as if disgrace and ill,
And shameful death were near.
He drew his mantle past his face,
Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space
Reclining on his hand.

His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
That, could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wished to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII.

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
Fear, for their scourge, mean villains have,
Thou art the torturer of the brave!
Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they feel,
Even while they writhe beneath the smart
Of civil conflict in the heart.
For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And, smiling to Fitz-Eustace, said—
“Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul?
Say, what may this portend?”—
Then first the Palmer silence broke,
(The livelong day he had not spoke),
“The death of a dear friend.”²⁵

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity;
Marmion, whose soul could scantily brook,
Even from his King, a haughty look;
Whose accent of command controll'd,
In camps, the boldest of the bold;—
Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now—
Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow:
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,
So full upon his conscience strook,
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps, that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV.

Well might he falter!—By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betray'd,

Not that he augur'd of the doom,
Which on the living closed the tomb:
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid;
And wroth, because in wild despair
She practised on the life of Clare;
Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave;
And deem'd restraint in convent strange
Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's favourite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear;
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,
When the stern priests surprised their prey.
His train but deem'd the favourite page
Was left behind, to spare his age;
Or other if they deem'd, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard:
Woe to the vassal, who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI.

His conscience slept—he deem'd her well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But, waken'd by her favourite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say,
That fell so ominous and drear,
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose;
And Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd,
All lovely on his soul return'd;
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike, escape, pursuit.
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII.

"Alas!" he thought, "how changed that mien!
How changed these timid looks have been,
Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
Have steel'd her brow, and arm'd her eyes!
No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantles in her cheeks:
Fierce, and unfeminine, are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair;

And I the cause—for whom were given
 Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven!
 Would," thought he, as the picture grows,
 "I on its stalk had left the rose!
 Oh, why should man's success remove
 The very charms that wake his love!—
 Her convent's peaceful solitude
 Is now a prison harsh and rude;
 And, pent within the narrow cell,
 How will her spirit chafe and swell!
 How brook the stern monastic laws!
 The penance how—and I the cause!—
 Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse!"—
 And twice he rose to cry, "To horse!"—
 And twice his Sovereign's mandate came,
 Like damp upon a kindling flame;
 And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge
 She should be safe, though not at large?
 They durst not, for their island, shred
 One golden ringlet from her head."

XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
 Repentance and reviving love,
 Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
 I've seen Loch Vennacher obey,
 Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard,
 And, talkative, took up the word:
 "Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
 From Scotland's simple land away,
 To visit realms afar,
 Full often learn the art to know
 Of future weal, or future woe,
 By word, or sign, or star;
 Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
 If, knight-like, he despises fear,
 Not far from hence;—if fathers old
 Aright our hamlet legend told."—
 These broken words the menials move,
 (For marvels still the vulgar love,)
 And, Marmion giving license cold,
 His tale the Host thus gladly told:—

XIX.

The Host's Tale.

"A Clerk could tell what years have flown
 Since Alexander fill'd our throne,

(Third monarch of that warlike name,)
 And eke the time when here he came
 To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:
 A braver never drew a sword;
 A wiser never, at the hour
 Of midnight, spoke the word of power:
 The same, whom ancient records call
 The founder of the Goblin-Hall.²⁶
 I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
 Gave you that cavern to survey.
 Of lofty roof, and ample size,
 Beneath the castle deep it lies:
 To hew the living rock profound,
 The floor to pave, the arch to round,
 There never toil'd a mortal arm—
 It all was wrought by word and charm;
 And I have heard my grandsire say
 That the wild clamour and affray
 Of those dread artisans of hell,
 Who labour'd under Hugo's spell,
 Sounded as loud as ocean's war
 Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX.

"The King Lord Gifford's castle sought,
 Deep labouring with uncertain thought;
 Even then he muster'd all his host,
 To meet upon the western coast:
 For Norse and Danish galleys plied
 Their oars within the frith of Clyde.
 There floated Haco's banner trim,²⁷
 Above Norweyan warriors grim,
 Savage of heart, and large of limb
 Threatening both continent and isle,
 Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle;
 Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
 Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
 And tarried not his garb to change,
 But, in his wizard habit strange,²⁸
 Came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight;
 His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
 His high and wrinkled forehead bore
 A pointed cap, such as of yore
 Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore:
 His shoes were mark'd with cross and spell,
 Upon his breast a pentacle;²⁹
 His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
 Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,

Bore many a planetary sign,
Combust, and retrograde, and trine;
And in his hand he held prepared,
A naked sword without a guard.

XXI.

"Dire dealings with the fiendish race
Had mark'd strange lines upon his face;
Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
His eyesight dazzled seem'd and dim,
As one unused to upper day;
Even his own menials with dismay
Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly Sire,
In his unwonted wild attire;
Unwonted, for traditions run,
He seldom thus beheld the sun.—
'I know,' he said—(his voice was hoarse,
And broken seem'd its hollow force)—
'I know the cause, although untold,
Why the King seeks his vassal's hold:
Vainly from me my liege would know
His kingdom's future weal or woe;
But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
His courage may do more than art.

XXII.

"Of middle air the demons proud,
Who ride upon the racking cloud,
Can read, in fix'd or wandering star,
The issues of events afar;
But still their sullen aid withhold,
Save when by mightier force controll'd.
Such late I summon'd to my hall;
And though so potent was the call,
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deem'd a refuge from the spell,
Yet, obstinate in silence still
The haughty demon mocks my skill.
But thou,—who little know'st thy might,
As born upon that blessed night^{so}
When yawning graves, and dying groan,
Proclaim'd hell's empire overthrown,—
With untaught valour shalt compel
Response denied to magic spell.'—
'Gramercy,' quoth our Monarch free,
'Place him but front to front with me,
And, by this good and honour'd brand,
The gift of Oœur-de-Lion's hand,
Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
The demon shall a buffet bide.'—

His bearing bold the wizard view'd,
 And thus, well pleased, his speech renew'd:
 'There spoke the blood of Malcolm? mark:
 Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,
 The rampart seek, whose circling crown
 Crests the ascent of yonder down:
 A southern entrance shalt thou find;
 There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
 And trust thine elfin foe to see,
 In guise of thy worst enemy:
 Couch then thy lance, and spur thy steed—
 Upon him! and Saint George to speed!
 If he go down, thou soon shalt know
 What'er these airy sprites can show;—
 If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
 I am no warrant for thy life.'

XXIII.

"Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
 Alone, and arm'd, forth rode the King
 To that old camp's deserted round:
 Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound,
 Left-hand the town,—the Pictish race,
 The trench, long since, in blood did trace:
 The moor around is brown and bare,
 The space within is green and fair.
 The spot our village children know,
 For there the earliest wild-flowers grow;
 But woe betide the wandering wight,
 That treads its circle in the night!
 The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
 Gives ample space for full career:
 Opposed to the four points of heaven,
 By four deep gaps are entrance given.
 The southernmost our Monarch pass'd,
 Halted, and blew a gallant blast;
 And on the north, within the ring,
 Appear'd the form of England's King,
 Who then, a thousand leagues afar,
 In Palestine waged holy war:
 Yet arms like England's did he wield,
 Alike the leopards in the shield,
 Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
 The riders length of limb the same:
 Long afterwards did Scotland know,
 Fell Edward * was her deadliest foe.

* Edward I., surnamed Longshanks.

XXIV.

"The vision made our Monarch start,
 But soon he mann'd his noble heart,
 And in the first career they ran,
 The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man;
 Yet did a splinter of his lance
 Through Alexander's visor glance,
 And razed the skin—a puny wound.
 The King, light leaping to the ground,
 With naked blade his phantom foe
 Compell'd the future war to show.
 Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
 Where still gigantic bones remain,
 Memorial of the Danish war;
 Himself he saw, amid the field,
 On high his brandish'd war-axe wield,
 And strike proud Haco from his car,
 While all around the shadowy Kings
 Denmark's grim ravens cower'd their wings.
 'Tis said, that, in that awful night,
 Remoter visions met his sight,
 Foreshowing future conquests far,
 When our sons' sons wage northern war;
 A royal city, tower and spire,
 Redden'd the midnight sky with fire,
 And shouting crews her navy bore,
 Triumphant to the victor shore.
 Such signs may learned clerks explain—
 They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV.

"The joyful King turn'd home again,
 Headed his host, and quell'd the Dane;
 But yearly, when return'd the night
 Of his strange combat with the sprite,
 His wound must bleed and smart;
 Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
 'Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
 The penance of your start.'
 Long since beneath Dumfermline's nave,
 King Alexander fills his grave,
 Our Lady give him rest!
 Yet still the knightly spear and shield
 The Elfin Warrior doth wield,²¹
 Upon the brown hill's breast;
 And many a knight hath proved his chance,
 In the charm'd ring to break a lance,
 But all have foully sped;

Save two, as legends tell, and they
Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay,—
Gentles, my tale is said.”

XXVI.

The quaighs* were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign:
And with their lord, the squires retire;
The rest around the hostel fire,
Their drowsy limbs recline:
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid.
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppress'd with toil and ale, they snore;
The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange,

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;
Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
The foldings of his mantle green:
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket or by stream,
Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of ladye's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him, when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form, with nodding plume;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew.—

XXVIII.

“Fitz-Eustace! rise,—I cannot rest;—
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood:
The air must cool my feverish blood;
And fain would I ride forth, to see
The scene of Elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves;
I would not, that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale.”—

* A wooden cup composed of staves hooped together.

Then softly down the steps they slid;
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling, Marmion's steed array'd,
While, whispering, thus the baron said;—

XXIX.

“Didst never, good my youth, hear tell,
That on the hour when I was born,
Saint George, who graced my sire's chapel,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me,
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe!
Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite;—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring,”
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX.

Fitz-Eustace follow'd him abroad,
And mark'd him ~~pace~~ the village road,
And listen'd to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seem'd, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise,—
Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
For gospel, what the church believed,—
Should, stirr'd by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Array'd in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,
Unfix the strongest mind;
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But, patient, waited till he heard,

At distance, prick'd to utmost speed,
 The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
 Come town-ward rushing on;
 First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
 Then, clattering on the village road,—
 In other pace than forth he yode *

Return'd Lord Marmion.

Down hastily he sprung from selle,
 And, in his haste, wellnigh he fell;
 To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
 And spoke no word as he withdrew:
 But yet the moonlight did betray,
 The falcon-crest was soil'd with clay;
 And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
 By stains upon the charger's knee,
 And his left side, that on the moor
 He had not kept his footing sure.
 Long musing on these wondrous signs,
 At length to rest the squire reclines,
 Broken and short; for still between,
 Would dreams of terror intervene:
 Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
 The first notes of the morning lark.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Camp.

I.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
 The first notes of the merry lark.
 The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
 And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
 And with their light and lively call,
 Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
 Whistling they came, and free of heart,
 But soon their mood was changed;
 Complaint was heard on every part,
 Of something disarranged.

* *Yode*—used by old poets for *went*.

Some clamour'd loud for armour lost;
 Some brawl'd and wrangled with the host;
 "By Becket's bones," cried one, "I fear,
 That some false Scot has stolen my spear!"
 Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
 Found his steed wet with sweat and mire;
 Although the rated horse-boy sware,
 Last night he dress'd him sleek and fair.
 While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
 Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
 "Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
 Bevis lies dying in his stall:
 To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
 Of the good steed he loves so well?"
 Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
 The charger panting on his straw;
 Till one who would seem wisest, cried,—
 "What else but evil could betide,
 With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
 Better we had through mire and bush
 Been lantern-led by Friar Rush." ²²

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guess'd,
 Nor wholly understood,
 His comrades' clamorous complaints suppress'd;
 He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
 Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
 And found deep plung'd in gloomy thought,
 And did his tale display
 Simply, and as if he knew of nought
 To cause such disarray.
 Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
 Nor marvell'd at the wonders told,—
 Pass'd them as accidents of course,
 And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
 Had reckon'd with their Scottish host;
 And, as the charge he cast and paid,
 "Ill thou deservest thy hire," he said;
 "Dost see; thou knave, my horse's plight?
 Fairies have ridden him all the night,
 And left him in a foam!
 I trust that soon a conjuring band,
 With English cross, and blazing brand,
 Shall drive the devils from this land,
 To their infernal home:

For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trample to and fro."—
The laughing host look'd on the hire,—
"Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou comest among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo."
Here stay'd their talk, for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journey'd all the morning day.

IV.

The green-sward way was smooth and good,
Through Humbie's and through Saltoun's wood;
A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill,
There narrower closed, till over head
A vaulted screen the branches made.
"A pleasant path," Fitz-Eustace said;
"Such as where errant-knights might see
Adventures of high chivalry;
Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound, and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft, in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's meed."
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind;
Perchance to show his lore design'd;

For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall-window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton, or De Worde,
Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answer'd nought again.

V.

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolong'd by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far:
Each ready archer grasp'd his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know,
They breathed no point of war.

Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,
Some opener ground to gain;
And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees, receding, show'd
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade,
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI.

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang;
On prancing steeds they forward press'd,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore:
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmont, Rothsay, came,
In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
Attendant on a King-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
That feudal strife had often quell'd,
When wildest its alarms.

VII.

He was a man of middle age;
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on King's errand come;
But in the glances of his eye,
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home;
The flash of that satiric rage,
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
And broke the keys of Rome.
On milk-white palfrey forth he paced;
His cap of maintenance was graced
With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
Embroider'd round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis
And gallant unicorn.

So bright the King's armorial coat,
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colours, blazon'd brave,
The Lion, which his title gave ;
A train, which well beseem'd his state,
But all unarm'd, around him wait.

Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,^{ss}
Lord Lion King-at-arms!

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
Soon as he saw the Lion-King ;
For well the stately Baron knew
To him such courtesy was due,
Whom royal James himself had crown'd,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem ;
And wet his brow with hallow'd wine,
And on his finger given to shine
The emblematic gem.
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said :—
"Though Scotland's King hath deeply swore
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court ;
Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
And honours much his warlike fame,
My liege hath deem'd it shame, and lack
Of courtesy, to turn him back ;
And, by his order, I, your guide,
Must lodging fit and fair provide,
Till finds King James meet time to see
The flower of English chivalry."

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
Lord Marmion bears it as he may
The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
Beholding thus his place supplied,
Sought to take leave in vain :
Strict was the Lion-King's command,
That none, who rode in Marmion's band,
Should sever from the train ;
"England has her enow of spies
In Lady Heron's witching eyes :"

To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
But fair pretext to Marmion made.
The right-hand path they now decline,
And trace against the stream the Tyne.

x.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
Where Crichtoun Castle crowns the bank;²⁴
For there the Lion's care assign'd
A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
That Castle rises on the steep
Of the green vale of Tyne:
And far beneath, where slow they creep,
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist, and willows weep,
You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose;
Their various architecture shows
The builders' various hands;
A mighty mass, that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas bands.

xi.

Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude, and totter'd Keep,
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
Scutcheons of honour, or pretence,
Quarter'd in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence.
Nor wholly yet had time defaced
Thy lordly gallery fair;
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
Adorn thy ruin'd stair.
Still rises unimpair'd below,
The court-yard's graceful portico;
Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets richly show
Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle go,
To shield them from the storm.
And shuddering, still may we explore,
Where oft whilom were captives pent,

The darkness of thy Massy More ;*
 Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
 May trace, in undulating line,
 The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.

Another aspect Crichtoun show'd,
 As through its portal Marmion rode ;
 But yet 'twas melancholy state
 Received him at the outer gate ;
 For none were in the Castle then,
 But women, boys, or aged men.
 With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
 To welcome noble Marmion, came ;
 Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
 Proffer'd the Baron's rein to hold ;
 For each man that could draw a sword
 Had march'd that morning with their lord,
 Earl Adam Hepburn,—he who died^{as}
 On Flodden, by his sovereign's side :
 Long may his Lady look in vain !
 She ne'er shall see his gallant train
 Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
 'Twas a brave race, before the name
 Of hated Bothwell stain'd their fame.

XIII.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
 With every rite that honour claims,
 Attended as the King's own guest ;—
 Such the command of Royal James,
 Who marshall'd then his land's array,
 Upon the Borough-moor that lay,
 Perchance he would not foeman's eye
 Upon his gathering host should pry,
 Till full prepared was every band
 To march against the English land.
 Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
 Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit ;
 And, in his turn, he knew to prize
 Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise,
 Train'd in the lore of Rome and Greece,
 And policies of war and peace.

XIV.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
 That on the battlements they walk'd,
 And, by the slowly fading light,
 Of varying topics talked ;

* The pit, or prison vault.

And, unaware, the Herald-bard
 Said, Marmion might his toil have spared,
 In travelling so far;
 For that a messenger from heaven⁸⁶
 In vain to James had counsel given
 Against the English war:
 And, closer question'd, thus he told
 A tale, which chronicles of old
 In Scottish story have enroll'd:—

xv.

Sir Rabid Rindesay's Tale.

“Of all the palaces so fair,
 Built for the royal dwelling,
 In Scotland far beyond compare,
 Linlithgow is excelling;
 And in its park, in jovial June,
 How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
 How blithe the blackbird's lay!
 The wild-buck bells from ferny brake,⁸⁷
 The coot dives merry on the lake;
 The saddest heart might pleasure take
 To see all nature gay.
 But June is, to our sovereign dear,
 The heaviest month in all the year:
 Too well his cause of grief you know,
 June saw his father's overthrow.⁸⁸
 Woe to the traitors, who could bring
 The princely boy against his King!
 Still in his conscience burns the sting.
 In offices as strict as Lent,
 King James's June is ever spent.

xvi.

“When last this ruthless month was come,
 And in Linlithgow's holy dome
 The King, as wont, was praying;
 While, for his royal father's soul,
 The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
 The Bishop mass was saying—
 For now the year brought round again
 The day the luckless king was slain—
 In Katharine's aisle the Monarch knelt,
 With sackcloth-shirt and iron belt,
 And eyes with sorrow streaming;
 Around him, in their stalls of state,
 The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,
 Their banners o'er them beaming.

I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
 Bedeafen'd with the jangling knell,
 Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
 Through the stain'd casement gleaming;
 But, while I marked what next befell,
 It seem'd as I were dreaming.
 Stepp'd from the crowd a ghostly wight,
 In azure gown, with cincture white;
 His forehead bald, his head was bare.
 Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
 Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,—
 I pledge to you my knightly word,
 That, when I saw his placid grace,
 His simple majesty of face,
 His solemn bearing and his pace
 So stately gliding on,—
 Seem'd to me ne'er did limner paint
 So just an image of the Saint,
 Who propp'd the Virgin in her faint,—
 The loved Apostle John!

XVII.

“He stepp'd before the Monarch's chair,
 And stood with rustic plainness there,
 And little reverence made;
 Nor head, nor body, bow'd nor bent.
 But on the desk his arm he leant,
 And words like these he said,
 In a low voice—but never tone
 So thrill'd through vein, and nerve, and bone:—
 ‘My mother sent me from afar,
 Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—
 Woe waits on thine array;
 If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
 Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
 James Stuart, doubly warn'd, beware:
 God keep thee as he may!’—
 The wondering Monarch seem'd to seek
 For answer, and found none;
 And when he raised his head to speak,
 The monitor was gone.
 The Marshal and myself had cast
 To stop him as he outward pass'd
 But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
 He vanish'd from our eyes,
 Like sunbeam on the billow cast
 That glances but, and dies.”

XVIII.

While Lindesay told his marvel strange,
The twilight was so pale,
He mark'd not Marmion's colour change,
While listening to the tale;
But, after a suspended pause,
The Baron spoke:—"Of Nature's laws
So strong I held the force,
That never superhuman cause
Could e'er control their course;
And three days since, had judged your aim
Was but to make your guest your game.
But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
What much has changed my sceptic creed,
And made me credit aught—" He staid,
And seem'd to wish his words unsaid:
But, by that strong emotion press'd,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Nought of the Palmer says he there,
And nought of Constance, or of Clare;
The thoughts which broke his sleep he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couch'd my head:
Fantastic thoughts returned;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burn'd.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reach'd the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I pass'd through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear,—
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own

XX.

"Thus judging, for a little space
I listen'd, ere I left the place;
But scarce could trust my eyes,

Nor yet can think they serv'd me true,
 When sudden in the ring I view,
 In form distinct of shape and hue,
 A mounted champion rise.—
 I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
 In single fight, and mix'd affray,
 And ever, I myself may say,
 Have borne me as a knight;
 But when this unexpected foe
 Seem'd starting from the gulf below,—
 I care not though the truth I show,—
 I trembled with affright;
 And as I placed in rest my spear,
 My hand so shook for very fear,
 I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

"Why need my tongue the issue tell?
 We ran our course,—my charger fell;—
 What could he 'gainst the shock of hell?—
 I roll'd upon the plain.
 High o'er my head, with threatening hand,
 The spectre shook his naked brand,—
 Yet did the worst remain:
 My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
 Not opening hell itself could blast
 Their sight, like what I saw!
 Full on his face the moonbeam strook,—
 A face could never be mistook!
 I knew the stern vindictive look,
 And held my breath for awe.
 I saw the face of one who, fled
 To foreign climes, has long been dead,—
 I well believe the last;
 For ne'er, from vizor raised, did stare
 A human warrior, with a glare
 So grimly and so ghast.
 Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade;
 But when to good Saint George I pray'd,
 (The first time e'er I ask'd his aid,)
 He plunged it in the sheath;
 And, on his courser mounting light,
 He seem'd to vanish from my sight:
 The moonbeam droop'd, and deepest night
 Sunk down upon the heath.—
 'Twere long to tell what cause I have
 To know his face, that met me there,

Call'd by his hatred from the grave.
To cumber upper air:
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy."

XXII.

Marvell'd Sir David of the Mount;
Then, learn'd in story, 'gan recount
Such chance had happ'd of old,
When once, near Norham, there did fight
A spectre fell of fiendish might,
In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And train'd him nigh to disallow
The aid of his baptismal vow.
"And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
And fingers red with gore,
Is seen in Rothimurcus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnaslaid,
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.
And yet whate'er such legends say,
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold
These midnight terrors vain;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour,
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbour unrepented sin."—
Lord Marmion turn'd him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
Then press'd Sir David's hand,—
But nought, at length, in answer said,
And here their farther converse staid,
Each ordering that his band
Should bowne them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
Such was the King's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road.
And I could trace each step they trode:
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone,
Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore;
But, passing such digressions o'er,

Suffice it that their route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They pass'd the glen and scanty rill,
And climb'd the opposing bank, until
They gain'd the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV.

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed as I lay at rest,
While rose on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And o'er the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook,
To me they make a heavy moan,
Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV.

But different far the change has been,
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown;
Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,⁸⁹
Upland, and dale, and down:—
A thousand, did I say? I ween
Thousands, on thousands, there were seen,
That chequer'd all the heath between
The streamlet and the town;
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular;
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green:
In these extended lines there lay,
A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
And from the southern Redswire edge,
To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge;

From west to east, from south to north,
Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come;
The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
Where chiefs review'd their vassal rank,
And charger's shrilling neigh;
And see the shifting lines advance
While frequent flash'd from shield and lance,
The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreaths of failing smoke declare
To embers now the brands decay'd,
Where the night watch their fires had made.
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
And dire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugg'd to war;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,*
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omen'd gift! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII.

Nor mark'd they less, where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair;
Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tailed, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol,† there
O'er the pavilions flew.⁴⁰
Highest and midmost, was descried
The royal banner floating wide;
The staff, a pine-tree, strong and straight,
Pitch'd deeply in a massive stone,
Which still in memory is shown,
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight
Whene'er the western wind unroll'd,
With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.⁴¹

* Seven culverins so called, cast by one Borthwhick.

† Each of these feudal ensigns intimated the different rank of those entitled to display them.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape bright,—
 He view'd it with a chief's delight,—
 Until within him burn'd his heart,
 And lightning from his eye did part,
 As on the battle-day;
 Such glance did falcon never dart,
 When stooping on his prey.
 'Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
 Thy King from warfare to dissuade
 Were but a vain essay:
 For, by St George, were that host mine,
 Not power infernal nor divine,
 Should once to peace my soul incline,
 Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
 In glorious battle-fray!"
 Answer'd the Bard, of milder mood,—
 "Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good,
 That kings would think withal,
 When peace and wealth their land has bless'd,
 'Tis better to sit still at rest,
 Than rise, perchance to fall."

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
 For fairer scene he ne'er survey'd.
 When sated with the martial show
 That peopled all the plain below,
 The wandering eye could o'er it go,
 And mark the distant city glow
 With gloomy splendour red;
 For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
 That round her sable turrets flow,
 The morning beams were shed,
 And tinged them with a lustre proud,
 Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
 Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
 Where the huge Castle holds its state,
 And all the steep slope down,
 Whose ridgy back leaves to the sky,
 Piled deep and massy, close and high,
 Mine own romantic town!
 But northward far, with purer blaze,
 On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
 And as each heathy top they kiss'd,
 It gleam'd a purple amethyst.
 Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
 Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law:

And, broad between them roll'd,
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.
Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridal hand,
And making demi-volte in air,
Cried, "Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land!"
The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
Nor Marmion's frown repress'd his glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they look'd, a flourish proud,
Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
And fife, and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
Did up the mountain come;
The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
Merrily toll'd the hour of prime,
And thus the Lindesay spoke:
"Thus clamour still the war-notes when
The King to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to St Katharine's of Sienne,
Or Chapal of Saint Rocque,
To you they speak of martial fame;
But me remind of peaceful game,
When blither was their cheer,
Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
In signal none his steed should spare,
But strive which foremost might repair
To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.

"Nor less," he said,— "when looking forth,
I view yon Empress of the North
Sit on her hilly throne;
Her palace's imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls and holy towers—
Nor less," he said, "I moan,

To think what woe mischance may bring,
And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant King;
Or with the larum call
The burghers forth to watch and ward,
'Gainst Southern sack and fires to guard
Dun-Edin's leaguer'd wall.—
But not for my presaging thought,
Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!
Lord Marmion, I say nay:
God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and shield,—
But thou thyself shalt say,
When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
That England's dames must weep in bower,
Her monks the death-mass sing;
For never saw'st thou such a power
Led on by such a King."—
And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,
And there they made a stay.—
There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
His hand o'er every Border string,
And fit his harp the pomp to sing,
Of Scotland's ancient Court and King,
In the succeeding lay.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Court.

I.

THE train has left the hills of Braid ;
The barrier guard have open made
(So Lindesay bade) the palisade,
That closed the tented ground ;
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through,
Into its ample bound.
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare.
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes ;
Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
So huge, that many simply thought,
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought ;
And little deem'd their force to feel,
Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
When rattling upon Flodden vale,
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.⁴²

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
Glance every line and squadron through ;
And much he marvell'd one small land
Could marshal forth such various band :
For men-at-arms were here,
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
Like iron towers for strength and weight,
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
With battle-axe and spear.
Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
Practised their chargers on the plain,
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,
Each warlike feat to show,
To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
And high curvett, that not in vain
The sword sway might descend amain ⁴³
On foeman's casque below.

He saw the hardy burghers there ⁴¹
 March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare,
 For vizor they wore none,
 Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;
 But burnish'd were their corslets bright,
 Their brigantines, and gorgets light,
 Like very silver shone.
 Long pikes they had for standing fight,
 Two-handed swords they wore,
 And many wielded mace of weight,
 And bucklers bright they bore.

III.

On foot the yeoman too, but dress'd
 In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,
 With iron quilted well
 Each at his back (a slender store)
 His forty days' provision bore, ⁴²
 As feudal statutes tell.
 His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,
 A crossbow there, a hagbut here,
 A dagger-knife, and brand.
 Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,
 As loath to leave his cottage dear,
 And march to foreign strand;
 Or musing who would guide his steer;
 To till the fallow land.
 Yet deem not, in his thoughtful eye,
 Did aught of dastard terror lie;
 More dreadful far his ire,
 Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,
 In eager mood to battle came,
 Their valour like light straw on flame,
 A fierce but fading fire.

IV.

Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,
 He knew the battle's din afar,
 And joy'd to hear it swell.
 His peaceful day was slothful ease;
 Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please
 Like the loud slogan yell.
 On active steed, with lance and blade,
 The light-arm'd pricker plied his trade,—
 Let nobles fight for fame;
 Let vassals follow where they lead,
 Burghers, to guard their townships, bleed,
 But war's the Borderer's game.

Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night,
O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
Joyful to fight they took their way,
Scarce caring who might win the day,
Their booty was secure.
These, as Lord Marmion's train passed by,
Look'd on at first with careless eye,
Nur marvell'd aught, well taught to know
The form and force of English bow.
But when they saw the Lord array'd
In splendid arms, and rich brocade,
Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—
“Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride.—
O! could we but on Border side,
By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
Beset a prize so fair!
That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
Might chance to lose his glistering hide;
Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
Could make a kirtle rare.”

v.

Next, Marmion mark'd the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man;
Just then the Chiefs their tribes array'd,
And wild and garish semblance made,
The chequer'd trews, and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd,
To every varying clan;
Wild through their red or sable hair
Look'd out their eyes with savage stare,
On Marmion as he passed;
There legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And harden'd to the blast;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted Red-deer's undress'd hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied;
The graceful bonnet deck'd their head:
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but O!
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,

To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they pass'd,
And reach'd the City gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Arm'd burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamp'd, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show:
At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang;
Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
Through street, and lane, and market place,
Bore lance, or casque, or sword;
While burghers, with important face,
Described each new come lord,
Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,
His following,* and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'er look'd the crowded street;
There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
Such was the King's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich, and costly wines,⁴⁶
To Marmion and his train;
And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace-halls they gain.

* Feudal retainers.

VII.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
That night, with wassel, mirth, and glee:
King James within her princely bower
Feasted the chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summon'd to spend the parting hour;
For he had charged, that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid monarch aye
The banquet and the song;
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past;
It was his blithest—and his last.
The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
Cast on the Court a dancing ray;
Here to the harp did minstrel sing;
There ladies touch'd a softer string;
With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,
The licensed fool retail'd his jest,
His magic tricks the juggler plied:
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
While some, in close recess apart,
Court'd the ladies of their heart,
Nor court'd them in vain.
For often, in the parting hour,
Victorious love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain;
And flinty is her heart, can view
To battle march a lover true—
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.

Through this mixed crowd of glee and game,
The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know,
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doff'd, to Marmion bending low,
His broider'd cap and plume.
For royal was his garb and mien,
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
Trimm'd with the fur of martin wild;
His vest of changeful satin sheen,
The dazzled eye beguiled;

His gorgeous collar hung adown,
 Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
 The thistle brave, of old renown:
 His trusty blade, Toledo right,
 Descended from a baldric bright;
 White were his buskins, on the heel,
 His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
 His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
 Was button'd with a ruby rare:
 And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
 A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.

The monarch's form was middle size;
 For feat of strength, or exercise,
 Shaped in proportion fair;
 And hazel was his eagle eye,
 And auburn of the darkest dye,
 His short curl'd beard and hair.
 Light was his footstep in the dance,
 And firm his stirrup in the lists;
 And, oh! he had that merry glance,
 That seldom lady's heart resists.
 Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
 And loved to plead, lament, and sue;—
 Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain,
 For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.

I said he joy'd in banquet bower;
 But, 'mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,
 How suddenly his cheer would change,
 His look o'ercast and lower,
 If, in a sudden turn, he felt
 The pressure of his iron belt,
 That bound his breast in penance pain,⁴⁷
 In memory of his father slain.
 Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
 Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
 Forward he rush'd, with double glee,
 Into the stream of revelry:
 Thus, dim-seen object of affright
 Startles the courser in his flight,
 And half he halts, half springs aside;
 But feels the quickening spur applied,
 And, straining on the tighten'd rein,
 Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
 Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway:⁴⁸
 To Scotland's Court she came,

To be a hostage for her lord,
Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
And with the King to make accord,
Had sent his lovely dame.
Nor to that lady free alone
Did the gay King allegiance own;
For the fair Queen of France⁴⁹
Sent him a turquois ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance;
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.
And thus, for France's Queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailed vest;
And thus admitted English fair
His inmost counsels still to share;
And thus, for both, he madly plann'd
The ruin of himself and land!
And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
Were worth one peril-drop, bright and sheen,
From Margaret's eyes that fell,—
His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's bower,
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

XI.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day,
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle brail:—
And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
Dame Heron rises with a smile
Upon the harp to play.
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
The strings her fingers flew;—
And as she touch'd and tuned them all,
Ever her bosom's rise and fall
Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside
Her wimple, and her hood untied.
And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
And then around the silent ring;
And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!

At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively, air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung:—

XII.

LOCHINVAR.

Lady Heron's Song.

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword, he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late;
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers and all,
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,)
"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace:
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, "'Twere better by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar,"

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

XIII.

The monarch o'er the siren hung,
And beat the measure as she sung;
And, pressing closer, and more near,
He wisper'd praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied;
And ladies wink'd, and spoke aside.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seem'd to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest too,
A real or feign'd disdain:
Familiar was the look and told,
Marmion and she were friends of old.
The King observed their meeting eyes,
With something like displeased surprise;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad,
Which Marmion's high commission show'd:
"Our Borders sack'd by many a raid,
Our peaceful liegemen robb'd," he said;
"On day of truce our Warden slain,
Stout Barton kill'd, his vassals ta'en—
Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."

XIV.

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant view'd:
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,

And, when his blood and heart were high,
 Did the third James in camp defy,
 And all his minions led to die
 On Lauder's dreary flat:
 Princes and favourites long grew tame,
 And trembled at the homely name
 Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;⁵⁰
 The same who left the dusky vale
 Of hermitage in Liddisdale,
 Its dungeons, and its towers,
 Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
 And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,
 To fix his princely bowers.
 Though now, in age, he had laid down
 His armour for the peaceful gown,
 And for a staff his brand,
 Yet often would flash forth the fire,
 That could, in youth, a monarch's ire
 And minion's pride withstand;
 And even that day, at council board,
 Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
 Against the war had Angus stood,⁵¹
 And chaff'd his royal lord,

IV.

His giant form, like ruin'd tower,
 Though fall'n its muscles' brawny vaunt,
 Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
 Seem'd o'er the gandy scene to lower:
 His locks and beard in silver grew;
 His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
 Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
 His bitter speech he thus pursued:
 "Lord Marmion, since these letters say,
 That in the North you needs must stay,
 While slightest hopes of peace remain,
 Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
 To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
 Until my herald come again.—
 Then rest you in Tantallon Hold;⁵²
 Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
 A chief unlike his sires of old,
 He wears their motto on his blade,⁵³
 Their blazon o'er his towers display'd;
 Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
 More than to face his country's foea.
 And, I bethink me, by St Stephen,
 But e'en this morn to me was given

A prize, the first-fruits of the war,
 Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
 A bevy of the maids of Heaven.
 Under your guard, these holy maids
 Shall safe return to cloister shades,
 And, while they at Tantallon stay,
 Requiem for Cochrane's soul may say."
 And, with the slaughter'd favourite's name,
 Across the Monarch's brow there came
 A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

XVI.

In answer nought could Angus speak;
 His proud heart swell'd wellnigh to break:
 He turn'd aside, and down his cheek
 A burning tear there stole.
 His hand the monarch sudden took,
 That sight his kind heart could not brook:
 "Now, by the Bruce's soul,
 Angus my hasty speech forgive!
 For sure as doth his spirit live,
 As he said of the Douglas old,
 I well may say of you,—
 That never king did subject hold,
 In speech more free, in war more bold.
 More tender and more true:
 Forgive me, Douglas, once again."—
 And, while the King his hand did strain,
 The old man's tears fell down like rain.
 To seize the moment Marmion tried,
 And whisper'd to the King aside:
 "Oh! let such tears unwonted plead
 For respite short from dubious deed!
 A child may weep a bramble's smart,
 A maid to see her sparrow part,
 A stripling for a woman's heart:
 But woe awaits a country, when
 She sees the tears of bearded men.
 Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,
 When Douglas wets his manly eye!"

XVII.

Displeased was James, that stranger view'd
 And tamper'd with his changing mood.
 "Laugh those that can, weep those that may."
 Thus did the fiery monarch say,
 "Southward I march by break of day;
 And if within Tantallon strong,
 The good Lord Marmion tarries long,

Perchance our meeting next may fall
 At Tamworth, in his castle-hall."—
 The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
 And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt ;
 " Much honour'd were my humble home,
 If to its halls King James should come ;
 But Nottingham has archers good,
 And Yorkshire men are stern of mood :
 Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
 On Derby hills the paths are steep ;
 In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep ;
 And many a banner will be torn,
 And many a knight to earth be borne,
 And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
 Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent ;
 Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet you may ! "
 The Monarch lightly turn'd away,
 And to his nobles loud did call,—
 " Lords, to the dance,—a hall ! a hall ! " *
 Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
 And led Dame Heron gallantly ;
 And minstrels, at the royal order,
 Rung out—" Blue Bonnets o'er the Border."

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now, to tell
 What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
 Whose galley, as they sail'd again
 To Whitby by a Scot was ta'en.
 Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
 Till James should of their fate decide ;
 And soon, by his command,
 Were gently summon'd to prepare
 To journey under Marmion's care,
 As escort honour'd, safe, and fair,
 Again to English land.
 The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
 Nor knew which saint she should implore ;
 For when she thought of Constance sore
 She fear'd Lord Marmion's mood.
 And judge what Clara must have felt !
 The sword, that hung in Marmion's belt,
 Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
 Unwittingly, King James had given,
 As guard to Whitby's shades,
 The man most dreaded under Heaven
 By these defenceless maids :

* The ancient cry to make room for a dance, or pageant.

Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale,
Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
'Mid bustle of a war begun?
They deem'd it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the King assign'd,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, join'd;
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warn'd him by a scroll,
She had a secret to reveal,
That much concerned the Church's weal,
And health of sinner's soul;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet,
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
Above the stately street;
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

XX.

At night, in secret, there they came,
The Palmer and the holy Dame.
The moon among the clouds rose high,
And all the city hum was by.
Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,
You might have heard a pebble fall,
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
An owlet flap his boding wing
On Giles's steeple tall.
The antique buildings, climbing high,
Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
Were here wrapt deep in shade;
There on their brows the moonbeam broke,
Through the faint wreathes of silvery smoke,
And on the casements play'd.
And other light was none to see,
Save torches gliding far,
Before some chieftain of degree,
Who left the royal revelry
To bowne him for the war.—
A solemn scene the Abbess chose;
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI.

"O, holy Palmer!" she began,—
 "For sure he must be sainted man,
 Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
 Where the Redeemer's tomb is found,—
 For His dear Church's sake, my tale
 Attend, nor deem of light avail,
 Though I must speak of worldly love,—
 How vain to those who wed above!—
 De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd
 Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood;
 (Idle it were of Whitby's dame,
 To say of that same blood I came;)
 And once, when jealous rage was high,
 Lord Marmion said despiteously,
 Wilton was traitor in his heart,
 And had made league with Martin Swart,⁵⁴
 When he came here on Simmel's part;
 And only cowardice did restrain
 His rebel aid on Stockfield's plain,—
 And down he threw his glove:—the thing
 Was tried, as wont, before the King;
 Where frankly did De Wilton own,
 That Swart in Gueldres he had known;
 And that between them then there went
 Some scroll of courteous compliment.
 For this he to his castle sent;
 But when his messenger return'd,
 Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd
 For in his packet there were laid
 Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,
 And proved King Henry's cause betray'd.
 His fame, thus blighted, in the field
 He strove to clear, by spear and shield;
 To clear his fame in vain he strove,
 For wondrous are His ways above!
 Perchance some form was unobserved;
 Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved;⁵⁵
 Else how could guiltless champion quail,
 Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII.

"His squire, who now De Wilton saw
 As recreant doom'd to suffer law,
 Repentant, own'd in vain,
 That while he had the scrolls in care,
 A stranger maiden, passing fair,
 Had drench'd him with a beverage rare;
 His words no faith could gain.

With Clare alone he credence won,
Who, rather than wed Marmion,
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
To give our house her livings fair,
And die a vestal vot'ress there.
The impulse from the earth was given,
But bent her to the paths of heaven.
A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
Ne'er shelter'd her in Whitby's shade,
No, not since Saxon Edelfled;
Only one trace of earthly strain,
That for her lover's loss
She cherishes a sorrow vain,
And murmurs at the cross.—
And then her heritage; it goes
Along the banks of Tame;
Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
In meadows rich the heifer lows,
The falconer and huntsman knows
Its woodlands for the game.
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
And I, her humble vot'ress here,
Should do a deadly sin,
Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,
If this false Marmion such a prize
By my consent should win;
Yet hath our boisterous Monarch sworn,
That Clare shall from our house be torn;
And grievous cause have I to fear,
Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII.

“Now, prisoner, helpless, and betray'd
To evil power, I claim thine aid,
By every step that thou hast trod
To holy shrine and grotto dim,
By every martyr's tortured limb,
By angel, saint, and seraphim,
And by the church of God!
For mark:—when Wilton was betray'd,
And with his squire forged letters laid,
She was, alas! that sinful maid
By whom the deed was done,—
O! shame and horror to be said!—
She was a perjured nun!
No clerk in all the land, like her,
Traced quaint and varying character.

Perchance you may a marvel deem,
 That Marmion's paramour
 (For such vile thing she was) should scheme
 Her lover's nuptial hour;
 But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
 As privy to his honour's stain,
 Illimitable power;
 For this she secretly retain'd
 Each proof that might the plot reveal,
 Instructions with his hand and seal;
 And thus Saint Hilda deign'd,
 Through sinners' perfidy impure,
 Her house's glory to secure,
 And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV.

"'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
 How to my hand these papers fell;
 With me they must not stay.
 Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
 Who knows what outrage he might do,
 While journeying by the way?—
 O, blessed Saint, if e'er again
 I venturous leave thy calm domain,
 To travel or by land or main,
 Deep penance may I pay!—
 Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
 I give this packet to thy care,
 For thee to stop they will not dare;
 And O! with cautious speed,
 To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
 That he may show them to the King:
 And, for thy well-earn'd meed,
 Thou holy man at Whitby's shrine
 A weekly mass shall still be thine,
 While priests can sing and read.—
 What ail'st thou?—Speak!"—For as he took
 The charge, a strong emotion shook
 His frame; and, ere reply,
 They heard a faint, yet shrilling tone,
 Like distant clarion feebly blown,
 That on the breeze did die;
 And loud the Abbess shriek'd in fear,
 "Saint Withold, save us!—What is here!
 Look at yon City Cross!
 See on its battled tower appear
 Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,
 And blazon'd banners toss!"

XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,⁵⁸
 Rose on a turret octagon;
 (But now is razed that monument,
 Whence royal edict rang,
 And voice of Scotland's law was sent
 In glorious trumpet-clang.
 O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
 Upon its dull destroyer's head!—
 A minstrel's malison* is said.)—
 Then on its battlements they saw
 A vision, passing Nature's law,
 Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
 Figures that seem to rise and die,
 Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
 While nought confirm'd could ear or eye
 Discern of sound or mien.
 Yet darkly did it seem, as there
 Heralds and pursuivants prepare,
 With trumpet sound, and blazon fair,
 A summons to proclaim;
 But indistinct the pageant proud,
 As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
 When flings the moon upon her shroud
 A wavering tinge of flame;
 It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
 From midmost of the spectre crowd,
 This awful summons came:—⁵⁷

XXVI.

"Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
 Whose names I now shall call,
 Scottish, or foreigner, give ear!
 Subjects of him who sent me here,
 At his tribunal to appear,
 I summon one and all:
 I cite you by each deadly sin,
 That e'er hath soil'd your hearts within;
 I cite you by each brutal lust,
 That e'er defiled your earthly dust,—
 By wrath, by pride, by fear,
 By each o'er mastering passion's tone,
 By the dark grave, and dying groan!
 When forty days are pass'd and gone,
 I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
 To answer and appear."

* *Malison*—curse.

Then thunder'd forth a roll of names :—
 The first was thine, unhappy James !
 Then all thy nobles came ;
 Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
 Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,—
 Why should I tell their separate style ?
 Each chief of birth and fame,
 Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
 Fore-doom'd to Flodden's carnage pile,
 Was cited there by name ;
 And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
 Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
 De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
 The self-same thundering voice did say.—
 But then another spoke :
 " Thy fatal summons I deny,
 And thine infernal Lord defy,
 Appealing me to Him on High,
 Who burst the sinner's yoke."
 At that dread accent with a scream,
 Parted the pageant like a dream,
 The summoner was gone.
 Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
 And fast, and fast, her beads did tell ;
 Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
 And found her there alone.
 She mark'd not, at the scene aghast,
 What time, or how, the Palmer pass'd.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move,
 Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
 Save when, for weal of those they love,
 To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
 The tottering child, the anxious fair,
 The grey-hair'd sire, with pious care,
 To chapels and to shrines repair—
 Where is the Palmer now ? and where
 The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare ?
 Bold Douglas ! to Tantallon fair
 They journey in thy charge :
 Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
 The Palmer still was with the band ;
 Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
 That none should roam at large.
 But in that Palmer's alter'd mien
 A wondrous change might now be seen,
 Freely he spoke of war,

Of marvels wrought by single hand,
When lifted for a native land;
And still look'd high, as if he plann'd
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his mettle bold provoke,
Then soothe or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came,
By Eustace govern'd fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
Ever he fear'd to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.
His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fann'd by looks and sighs,
And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He long'd to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land:
Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest, by that meanness won
He almost loath'd to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause,
Which made him burst through honour's laws.
If e'er he lov'd, 'twas her alone,
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.

And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause awhile,
Before a venerable pile,^{LS}
Whose turrets view'd, afar,
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.

At tolling of a bell, forth came
 The convent's venerable Dame,
 And pray'd Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
 With her, a loved and honour'd guest,
 Till Douglas should a bark prepare
 To waft her back to Whitby fair,
 Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
 And thank'd the Scottish Prioress;
 And tedious were to tell, I ween,
 The courteous speech that pass'd between.

O'erjoy'd the nuns their palfreys leave;
 But when fair Clara did intend,
 Like them, from horseback to descend.

Fitz-Eustace said,—“I grieve,
 Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
 Such gentle company to part;—

Think not discourtesy,
 But lords' commands must be obey'd;
 And Marmion and the Douglas said,
 That you must wend with me.

Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
 Which to the Scottish Earl he show'd,
 Commanding that, beneath his care,
 Without delay, you shall repair
 To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.”

XXX.

The startled Abbess loud exclaim'd;
 But she, at whom the blow was aim'd,
 Grew pale as death, and cold as lead,—
 She deem'd she heard her death-doom read.
 “Cheer thee, my child!” the Abbess said,
 “They dare not tear thee from my hand,
 To ride alone with armed band.”—

“Nay, holy mother, nay,”
 Fitz-Eustace said, “the lovely Clare
 Will be in Lady Angus' care,
 In Scotland while we stay;
 And, when we move, an easy ride
 Will bring us to the English side,
 Female attendance to provide
 Befitting Gloster's heir;
 For thinks, nor dreams, my noble lord,
 By slightest look, or act, or word,
 To harass Lady Clare.
 Her faithful guardian he will be,
 Nor sue for slightest courtesy
 That e'en to stranger falls,

Till he shall place her, safe and free,
Within her kinsman's halls."
He spoke and blushed with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face,
And Clare's worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaim'd
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
Entreated, threaten'd, grieved;
To martyr, saint, and prophet pray'd,
Against Lord Marmion inveigh'd,
And call'd the Prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book.
Her head the grave Cistercian shook:
"The Douglas, and the King," she said,
"In their commands will be obey'd;
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
The maiden in Tantallon Hall."

XXXI.

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again,—
For much of state she had,—
Composed her veil, and raised her head,
And—"Bid," in solemn voice she said,
"Thy master, bold and bad,
The records of his house turn o'er,
And, when he shall there written see,
That one of his own ancestry
Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,"
Bid him his fate explore!
Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
His charger hurl'd him to the dust,
And, by a base plebeian thrust,
He died his band before.
God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
He is a Chief of high degree,
And I a poor recluse;
Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
Even such weak minister as me
May the oppressor bruise:
For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
The mighty in his sin,
And Jael thus, and Deborah"—
Here hasty Blount broke in:
"Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band;
St Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand
All day, with bonnet in my hand,
To hear the lady preach?"

By this good light! if thus we stay,
 Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,
 Will sharper sermon teach.
 Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse;
 The Dame must patience take perforce."—

XXXII.

"Submit me then to force," said Clare,
 "But let this barbarous lord despair
 His purposed aim to win;
 Let him take living, land, and life;
 But to be Marmion's wedded wife
 In me were deadly sin:
 And if it be the King's decree,
 That I must find no sanctuary,
 In that inviolable dome,
 Where even a homicide might come,
 And safely rest his head,
 Though at its open portals stood,
 Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
 The kinsmen of the dead;
 Yet one asylum is my own
 Against the dreaded hour;
 A low, a silent, and a lone,
 Where kings have little power.
 One victim is before me there.—
 Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
 Remember your unhappy Clare!"
 Loud weeps the Abbess and bestows
 Kind blessings many a one:
 Weeping and wailing loud arose,
 Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
 Of every simple nun.
 His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
 And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.
 Then took the squire her reign,
 And gently led away her steed,
 And, by each courteous word and deed,
 To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
 When o'er a height they pass'd,
 And, sudden, close before them show'd
 His towers, Tantallon vast;
 Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
 And held impregnable in war.
 On a projecting rock they rose,
 And round three sides the ocean flows,
 The fourth did battled walls enclose,

And double mound and fosse.
By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
To the main court they cross.
It was a wide and stately square:
Around were lodgings, fit and fair,
And towers of various form,
Which on the court projected far,
And broke its lines quadrangular.
Here was square keep, there turret high,
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
Whence of the Warder could descry
The gathering ocean-storm.

XXXIV.

Here did they rest.—The princely care
Of Douglas, why should I declare,
Or say they met reception fair?
Or why the tidings say,
Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts, or fleeter fame,
With every varying day?
And, first, they heard King James had won
Etall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvell'd Marmion;—
And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland:
But whisper'd news there came,
That, while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Heron's wily dame.—
Such acts to chronicles I yield;
Go seek them there and see:
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history.—
At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post,
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain,
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gather'd in the Southern land,
And march'd into Northumberland,
And camp at Wooller ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
Began to chafe, and swear:—

"A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
When such a field is near!
Needs must I see this battle-day:
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought, and Marmion away!
The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
Hath 'bated of his courtesy:
No longer in his halls I'll stay."
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Battle.

I.

WHILE great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanour, changed and cold,
Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold,
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuff'd the battle from afar;
And hopes were none, that back again
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's King in leaguer lay,
Before decisive battle-day;
Whilst these things were, the mournful Clare
Did in the Dame's devotions share:
For the good Countess ceaseless pray'd
To Heaven and Saints, her sons to aid,
And, with short interval, did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high Baronial pride,—
A life both dull and dignified;—
Yet as Lord Marmion nothing press'd
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthen'd prayer,
Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

II.

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repell'd the insult of the air,
Which, when the tempest vex'd the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
Above the rest a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of Sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart was in the Field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood,
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access where
A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go.
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,
Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,
And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign:
Above the booming ocean leant
The far projecting battlement;
The billows burst in ceaseless flow,
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gate-works, and walls, were strongly mann'd,
No need upon the sea-girt side;
The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
Approach of human step denied;
And thus these lines, and ramparts rude,
Were left in deepest solitude.

III.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,
And list the sea-bird's cry;
Or slow, like noontide ghost, would glide
Along the dark grey bulwarks' side,
And ever on the heaving tide
Look down with weary eye.
Oft did the cliff, and swelling main;
Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—
A home she ne'er might see again;
For she had laid adown,

So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
 And frontlet of the cloister pale,
 And Benedictine gown :
 It were unseemly sight, he said ;
 A novice out of convent shade.—
 Now her bright locks, with sunny glow,
 Again adorn'd her brow of snow ;
 Her mantle rich, whose borders, round,
 A deep and fretted broidery bound,
 In golden foldings sought the ground ;
 Of holy ornament, alone
 Remain'd a cross with ruby stone ;
 And often did she look
 On that which in her hand she bore,
 With velvet bound, and broider'd o'er,
 Her breviary book.
 In such a place, so lone, so grim,
 At dawning pale, or twilight dim,
 It fearful would have been
 To meet a form so richly dress'd,
 With book in hand, and cross on breast,
 And such a woeful mien.
 Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
 To practise on the gull and crow,
 Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
 And did by Mary swear,—
 Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
 Or, in Romance, some spell-bound Queen ;
 For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
 A form so witching fair.

IV.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
 It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
 And, sighing, thought—"The Abbess there,
 Perchance, does to her home repair:
 Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
 Walks hand in hand with Charity ;
 Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
 Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
 That the enraptured sisters see
 High vision, and deep mystery ;
 The very form of Hilda fair,
 Hovering upon the sunny air,⁶⁰
 And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
 O! wherefore, to my duller eye,
 Did still the Saint her form deny!
 Was it, that, sear'd by sinful scorn,
 My heart could neither melt nor burn?

Or lie my warm affections low,
 With him, that taught them first to glow?
 Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
 To pay thy kindness grateful due,
 And well could brook the mild command,
 That ruled thy simple maiden band.
 How different now! condemn'd to bide
 My doom from this dark tyrant's pride.—
 But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
 That constant mind, and hate of wrong,
 Descended to a feeble girl,
 From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
 Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
 He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

V.

"But see!—what makes this armour here?"—
 For in her path there lay
 Targe, corslet, helm;—she view'd them near.
 "The breast-plate pierced!—Ay, much I fear,
 Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
 That hath made fatal entrance hear,
 As these dark blood-gouts say.—
 Thus Wilton! Oh! not corslet's ward,
 Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
 Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
 On yon disastrous day!"
 She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
 WILTON himself before her stood!
 It might have seem'd his passing ghost,
 For every youthful grace was lost;
 And joy unwonted, and surprise,
 Gave this strange wildness to his eyes.
 Expect not, noble dames and lords,
 That I can tell such scene in words:
 What skilful limner e'er would choose
 To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
 Unless to mortal it were given
 To dip his brush in dyes of heaven!
 Far less can my weak line declare
 Each changing passion's shade;
 Brightening to rapture from despair,
 Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
 And joy, with her angelic air,
 And hope that paints the future fair,
 Their varying hues display'd:
 Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
 Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,

Till all, fatigued, the conflict yield,
And mighty Love retains the field.
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delay'd,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply:—

VI.

De Wilton's History.

“Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragg'd,—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled,—
I found me on a pallet low,
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
Austin,—Remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush, when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair?—
Menials, and friends, and kinsmen, fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care,
When sense return'd to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a Palmer's weeds array'd,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journey'd many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason fear'd,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes uprear'd.
My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon:
And, while upon his dying bed,
He begg'd of me a boon—
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquer'd lie,
Even then my mercy should awake,
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

“Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.
Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perish'd of my wound,—
None cared which tale was true:
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his Palmer's dress;
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimm'd my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in the glass.
A chance most wondrous did provide,
That I should be that Baron's guide—
I will not name his name!—
Vengeance to God alone belongs;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,
My blood is liquid flame!
And ne'er the time shall I forget,
When, in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange:
What were his thoughts I cannot tell;
But in my bosom muster'd Hell
Its plans of dark revenge

VIII.

“A word of vulgar augury,
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale:
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
And sent him armed forth by night.
I borrow'd steed and mail,
And weapons from his sleeping band;
And, passing from a postern door,
We met, and counter'd hand to hand,—
He fell on Gifford moor.
For the death-stroke my brand I drew
(O then my helmed head he knew,
The Palmer's cowl was gone,)
Then had three inches of my blade
The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
My hand the thought of Austin staid;
I left him there alone.—
O good old man! even from the grave,
Thy spirit could thy master save:
If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
Given to my hand this packet dear,

Of power to clear my injured fame,
 And vindicate De Wilton's name.—
 Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
 Of the strange pageantry of Hell,
 That broke our secret speech—
 It rose from the infernal shade,
 Or featly was some juggle play'd,
 A tale of peace to teach.
 Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
 When my name came among the rest.

IX.

"Now here, within Tantallon Hold.
 To Douglas late my tale I told,
 To whom my house was known of old.
 Won by my proofs his falchion bright
 This eve anew shall dub me knight.
 These were the arms that once did turn
 The tide of fight on Otterburne,
 And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
 When the Dead Douglas won the field,
 These Angus gave—his armourer's care,
 Ere morn, shall every breach repair;
 For nought, he said, was in his halls,
 But ancient armour on the walls,
 And aged chargers in the stalls,
 And women, priests, and grey-hair'd men;
 The rest were all in Twisel glen.
 And now I watch my armour here,
 By law of arms, till midnight's near;
 Then, once again a belted knight,
 Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

X.

"There soon again we meet, my Clare!
 This Baron means to guide thee there:
 Douglas reveres his King's command,
 Else would he take thee from his band.
 And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
 Will give De Wilton justice due.
 Now meeter far for martial broil,
 Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil;
 Once more"—"O Wilton! must we then
 Risk new-found happiness again,
 Trust fate of arms once more?
 And is there not an humble glen,
 Where we, content and poor,
 Might build a cottage in the shade,
 A shepherd thou, and I to aid
 Thy task on dale and moor?—

That reddening brow!—too well I know,
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
While falsehood stains thy name:
Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
And weep a warrior's shame;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame!"

XI.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,
And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
Through loop-hole, and through embrasure,
Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
The sober glances fall.
Much was their need; though seam'd with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
Though two grey priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
The chapel's carving fair.
Amid that dim and smoky light,
Chequering the silvery moonshine bright,
A bishop by the altar stood,⁶¹
A noble Lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen, and rocquet white.
Yet show'd his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy;
More pleas'd that, in a barbarous age,
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
Beside him ancient Angus stood,
Doff'd his furr'd gown, and sable hood:
O'er his huge form and visage pale,
He wore a cap and shirt of mail;
And lean'd his large and wrinkled hand
Upon the huge and sweeping brand⁶²
Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
His foeman's limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray,
He seem'd as, from the tombs around
Rising at judgment-day,

Some giant Douglas may be found
 In all his old array;
 So pale his face, so huge his limb,
 So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
 And Clare the spurs bound on his heels;
 And think what next he must have felt,
 At buckling of the falchion belt!
 And judge how Clara changed her hue,
 While fastening to her lover's side
 A friend, which, though in danger tried,
 He once had found untrue!
 Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
 "Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
 I dub thee knight.
 Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!
 For King, for Church, for Lady fair,
 See that thou fight."—
 And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
 Said—"Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,
 Disgrace, and trouble;
 For He, who honour best bestows,
 May give thee double."—
 De Wilton sobb'd, for sob he must—
 "Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
 That Douglas is my brother!"
 "Nay, nay," old Angus said, "not so;
 To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
 Thy wrongs no longer smother.
 I have two sons in yonder field;
 And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
 Upon them bravely—do thy worst;
 And foul fall him that blanches first!"

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day,
 When Marmion did his troop array
 To Surrey's camp to ride;
 He had safe-conduct for his band,
 Beneath the royal seal and hand,
 And Douglas gave a guide:
 The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
 Would Clara on her palfrey place,
 And whisper'd in an under tone,
 "Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."—
 The train from out the castle drew,
 But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu:—

"Though something I might plain," he said,
"Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your King's behest.

While in Tantallon's towers I staid:
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke:
"My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
Be open at my Sovereign's will,
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my king's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own;
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

XIV.

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire,
And—"This to me!" he said,—
"And 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
He, who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate:
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
(Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,)
I tell thee thou'rt defied!
And if thou said'st I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!"—
On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth,—“And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall!
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—”
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, Warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall.”—

Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,
 And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
 Like arrow through the archway sprung,
 The ponderous grate behind him rung:
 To pass there was such scanty room,
 The bars, descending, razed his plume.

XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
 Just as it trembled on the rise;
 Nor lighter does the swallow skim
 Along the smooth lake's level brim:
 And when Lord Marmion reach'd his band,
 He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
 And shout of loud defiance pours,
 And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
 "Horse! horse!" the Douglas cried, "and chase."
 But soon he rein'd his fury's pace:
 "A royal messenger he came,
 Though most unworthy of the name.—
 A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
 Did ever knight so foul a deed!
 At first in heart it liked me ill,
 When the King praised his clerkly skill.
 Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
 Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line:
 So swore I, and I swear it still,
 Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
 Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
 Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood.
 I thought to slay him where he stood.
 'Tis pity of him too," he cried:
 "Bold can he speak, and fairly ride,
 I warrant him a warrior tried."
 With this his mandate he recalls,
 And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
 Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
 They cross'd the heights of Stanrig-moor.
 His troop more closely there he scann'd,
 And miss'd the Palmer from the band.—
 "Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
 "He parted at the peep of day;
 Good sooth it was in strange array,"—
 "In what array!" said Marmion, quick.
 "My Lord, I ill can spell the trick;

But all night long, with clink and bang,
 Close to my couch did hammers clang;
 At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
 And from a loop-hole while I peep,
 Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
 Wrapp'd in a gown of sables fair,
 As fearful of the morning air;
 Beneath, when that was blown aside,
 A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
 By Archibald won in bloody work,
 Against the Saracen and Turk;
 Last night it hung not in the hall;
 I thought some marvel would befall.
 And next I saw them saddled lead
 Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed;
 A matchless horse, though something old,
 Prompt in his paces, cool and bold,
 I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
 The Earl did much the Master * pray,
 To use him on the battle-day
 But he prefer'd "Nay, Henry, cease!
 Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
 Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray
 What did Blount see at break of day?"—

XVII.

"In brief, my Lord, we both desoried
 (For then I stood by Henry's side)
 The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
 Upon the Earl's own favourite steed:
 All sheathed he was in armour bright,
 And much resembled that same knight,
 Subdued by you in Cotswold fight;
 Lord Angus wish'd him speed."—
 The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
 A sudden light on Marmion broke:—
 "Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!"
 He mutter'd; "'Twas nor fay nor ghost
 I met upon the moonlight wold,
 But living man of earthly mould.—
 O dotage blind and gross!
 Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
 Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
 My path no more to cross.—
 How stand we now?—he told his tale
 To Douglas; and with some avail;
 'Twas therefore gloom'd his rugged brow.—

* His eldest son, the Master of Angus.

Will Surrey dare to entertain,
 'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain?
 Small risk of that, I trow.
 Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun;
 Must separate Constance from the Nun—
 O, what a tangled web we weave,
 When first we practise to deceive!
 A Palmer too!—no wonder why
 I felt rebuke beneath his eye:
 I might have known there was but one,
 Whose look could quell Lord Marmion."

XVIII.

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
 His troop, and reach'd, at eve, the Tweed,
 Where Lennel's convent closed their march;
 (There now is left but one frail arch,
 Yet mourn thou not its cells;
 Our time a fair exchange has made;
 Hard by, in hospitable shade,
 A reverend pilgrim dwells,
 Well worth the whole Bernardine brood,
 That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.)
 Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
 Give Marmion entertainment fair,
 And lodging for his train and Clare.
 Next morn the Baron climb'd the tower,
 To view afar the Scottish power,
 Encamp'd on Flodden edge:
 The white pavilions made a show,
 Like remnants of the winter snow,
 Along the dusky ridge.
 Long Marmion look'd:—at length his eye
 Unusual movement might descry
 Amid the shifting lines:
 The Scottish host drawn out appears,
 For, flashing on the hedge of spears
 The eastern sunbeam shines.
 Their front now deepening, now extending;
 Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
 Now drawing back, and now descending,
 The skilful Marmion well could know,
 They watch'd the motions of some foe,
 Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
 The Scots beheld the English host
 Leave Barmore-wood their evening post,
 And heedful watch'd them as they cross'd

The Till by Twisel Bridge.⁶⁸
High sight it is, and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;
Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing,
Upon the eastern bank you see.
Still pouring down the rocky den,
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And, sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill,
That morn, to make a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rock's deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom.
To give the marching columns room.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead?
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand?—
O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry—"Saint Andrew and our right!"
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne!—
The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host has gain'd the plain;
Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
 Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
 "Hark! hark! my Lord, an English drum!
 And see ascending squadrons come
 Between Tweed's river and the hill,
 Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what hap,
 My basnet to a prentice cap,
 Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!—
 Yet more! yet more!—how far array'd
 They file from out the hawthorn shade,
 And sweep so gallant by?
 With all their banners bravely spread,
 And all their armour flashing high,
 Saint George might waken from the dead,
 To see fair England's standards fly,"—
 "Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount, "thou'dst best,
 And listen to our lord's behest."—
 With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
 "This instant be our band array'd;
 The river must be quickly cross'd,
 That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
 If fight King James,—as well I trust,
 That fight he will, and fight he must,
 The Lady Clare behind our lines
 Shall tarry, while the battle joins."

XXII.

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
 Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu;
 Far less would listen to his prayer,
 To leave behind the helpless Clare.
 Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
 And mutter'd, as the flood they view,
 "The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
 He scarce will yield to please a daw:
 Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
 So Clare shall bide with me."
 Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
 Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
 He ventured desperately;
 And not a moment will he bide,
 Till squire, or groom before him ride;
 Headmost of all he stems the tide,
 And stems it gallantly.
 Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
 Old Hubert led her rein,

Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven per force,
The southern bank they gain;
Behind them straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train:
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharm'd, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men array'd,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a Cross of Stone,
That, on a hillock standing lone,
Did all the field command.

XXIII.

Hence might they see the full array^{or}
Of either host, for deadly fray;
Their marshall'd lines stretch'd east and west,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation pass'd
From the loud cannon mouth;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.—
The hillock gain'd, Lord Marmion staid:
"Here, by this Cross," he gently said,
"You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare!
O! think of Marmion in thy prayer!—
Thou wilt not?—well,—no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
With ten pick'd archers of my train;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid.
When here we meet again."
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire; but spurr'd amain,
And, dashing through the battle plain,
His way to Surrey took,

XXIV.

"——The good Lord Marmion, by my life!
 Welcome to danger's hour!—
 Short greeting serves in time of strife:—
 Thus have I ranged my power:
 Myself will rule this central host,
 Stout Stanley fronts their right,
 My sons command the vanward post,
 With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight,
 Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
 Shall be in rearward of the fight,
 And succour those that need it most.
 Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
 Would gladly to the vanguard go;
 Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
 With thee their charge shall blithely share;
 There fight thine own retainers too,
 Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."—
 "Thanks, noble Surrey!" Marmion said,
 Nor farther greeting there he paid;
 But, parting like a thunderbolt,
 First in the vanguard made a halt,
 Where such a shout there rose
 Of "Marmion! Marmion!" that the cry
 Up Flodden Mountain shrilling high,
 Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
 With Lady Clare upon the hill;
 On which, (for far the day was spent,)
 The western sunbeams now were bent.
 The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
 Could plain their distant comrades view:
 Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
 "Unworthy office here to stay!
 No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
 But see! look up—on Flodden bent
 The Scottish foe has fired his tent."
 And sudden, as he spoke,
 From the sharp ridges of the hill,
 All downward to the banks of Till,
 Was wreathed in sable smoke.
 Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
 The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
 As down the hill they broke;
 Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
 Announced their march; their tread alone,

At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.—
Scarce could they hear, or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air;
Oh! life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long look'd the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

. XXVI.

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plum'd crests of chieftains brave
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But not distinct they see;
Wide rag'd the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flash'd amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly:
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight;
Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly, and with Home.

XXVII.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;

Though there the western mountaineer
 Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
 And flung the feeble targe aside,
 And with both hands the broadsword plied,
 'Twas vain:—But Fortune, on the right,
 With fickle smile, cheer'd Scotland's fight.
 Then fell that spotless banner white,
 The Howard's lion fell;
 Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
 With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
 Around the battle-yell.
 The Border solgan rent the sky!
 A home! a Gordon! was the cry:
 Loud were the clanging blows;
 Advanced,—forced back, now low, now high,
 The pennon sunk and rose;
 As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
 When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
 It waver'd 'mid the foes.
 No longer Blount the view could bear:
 "By Heaven, and all its saints! I swear,
 I will not see it lost!
 Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clara
 May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
 I gallop to the host."
 And to the fray he rode amain,
 Follow'd by all the archer train.
 The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
 Made, for a space, an opening large,—
 The rescued banner rose,—
 But darkly closed the war around,
 Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
 It sunk among the foes.
 Then Eustace mounted too:—yet staid
 As loath to leave a helpless maid,
 When, fast as shaft can fly,
 Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
 The loose rein dangling from his head,
 Housing and saddle bloody red,
 Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by;
 And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
 A look and sign to Clara cast,
 To mark he would return in haste,
 Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
 Left in the dreadful hour alone:
 Perchance her reason stoops or reels;

Perchance a courage, not her own,
 Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
 The scatter'd van of England wheels;—
 She only said, as loud in air
 The tumult roar'd, "Is Wilton there?"—
 They fly, or, madden'd by despair.
 Fight but to die,—“Is Wilton there?”
 With that, straight up the hill there rode
 Two horsemen drench'd with gore,
 And in their arms, a helpless load,
 A wounded knight they bore,
 His hand still strain'd the broken brand
 His arms were smear'd with blood and sand.
 Dragg'd from among the horses' feet,
 With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
 The falcon crest and plumage gone,
 Can that be haughty Marmion!
 Young Blount his armour did unlace,
 And, gazing on his ghastly face,
 Said—“by Saint George, he's gone!
 That spear-wound has our master sped,—
 And see, the deep cut on his head!
 Good night to Marmion.”—
 “Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling cease:
 He opens his eyes,” said Eustace; “peace!”

XXIX.

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free air,
 Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare:—
 “Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace, where?
 Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
 Redeem my pennon,—charge again!
 Cry—‘Marmion to the rescue!’—Vain!
 Last of my race, on battle-plain
 That shout shall ne'er be heard again!—
 Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
 To Dacre bear my signet ring:
 Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
 Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie;
 Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
 His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
 Edmund is down:—my life is left;
 The Admiral alone is left.
 Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
 With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
 Full upon Scotland's central host,
 Or victory and England's lost.—
 Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!
 Leave Marmion here alone—to die.”

They parted, and alone he lay;
 Clare drew her from the sight away,
 Till pain rung forth a lowly moan,
 And half he murmur'd,—“Is there none,
 Of all my halls have nurst,
 Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
 Of blessed water from the spring,
 To slake my dying thirst?”

XXX.

O, woman! in our hours of ease,
 Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
 And variable as the shade
 By the light quivering aspen made;
 When pain and anguish ring the brow,
 A ministering angel thou!—
 Scarce were the piteous accents said,
 When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
 To the nigh streamlet ran:
 Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
 The plaintive voice alone she hears,
 Sees but the dying man.
 She stopp'd her by the runnels side,
 But in abhorrence backward drew;
 For, oozing from the mountain's side,
 Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
 Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
 Where shall she turn!—behold her mark
 A little fountain cell,
 Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
 In a stone basin fell.
 Above, some half-worn letters say,
 Drink . weary . pilgrim . drink . and . pray .
 For . the . kind . soul . of . Sybil . Gray .
 Who . built . this . cross . and . well .
 She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
 And with surprise and joy espied
 A Monk supporting Marmion's head;
 A pious man, whom duty brought
 To dubious verge of battle fought,
 To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
 And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
 “Is it the hand of Clare,” he said,
 “Or injured Constance, bathes my head?”
 Then, as remembrance rose,—

"Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!"—
"Alas!" she said, "the while,—
O, think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She———died at Holy Isle."—
Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents from his wounded side.
"Then it was truth," he said—"I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone
Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be! this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXXII.

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
And strove to stanch the gushing wound:
The Monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear
For that she ever sung,
*"In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!"*
So the notes rung;—
"Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand,
Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—
O look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine:
O, think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this."—
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale;

And—STANLEY! was the cry;—
 A light on Marmion's visage spread,
 And fired his glazing eye:
 With dying hand, above his head,
 He shook the fragment of his blade,
 And shouted "Victory!—
 Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!"
 Were the last words of Marmion,

XXXIII.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
 Still rose the battle's deadly swell
 For still the Scots, around their King,
 Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
 Where's now their victor vanward wing,
 Where Huntly, and where Home?—
 O for a blast of that dread horn,
 On Fentarabian echoes borne,
 That to King Charles did come,—
 When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
 And every paladin and peer,
 On Roncevalles died!
 Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
 To quit the plunder of the slain,
 And turn the doubtful day again,
 While yet on Flodden side,
 Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
 And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
 Our Caledonian pride!
 In vain the wish—for far away,
 While spoil and havoc mark their way,
 Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray,
 "O Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
 And placed her on her steed,
 And led her to the chapel fair,
 Of Tillmouth upon Tweed.
 There all the night they spent in prayer,
 And at the dawn of morning, there
 She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare,

XXXIV.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
 More desperate grew the strife of death.
 The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
 In headlong charge their horse assail'd:
 Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
 To break the Scottish circle deep,
 That fought around their King.

But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spear-men still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow
Dissolves in silent dew,
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong;
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield!

XXXV.

Day dawns upon the mountain's side;—
There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,
Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one:
The sad survivors all are gone.—
View not that corpse mistrustfully,
Defaced and mangled though it be;
Nor to yon Border castle high,
Look northward with upbraiding eye;
Nor cherish hope in vain,

That, journeying far on foreign strand,
 The Royal Pilgrim to his land
 May yet return again.
 He saw the wreck his rashness wrought;
 Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
 And fell on Flodden plain:⁶⁹
 And well in death his trusty brand,
 Firm clench'd within his manly hand,
 Beseem'd the Monarch slain.
 But, O! how changed since yon blithe night!
 Gladly I turn me from the sight,
 Unto my tale again.

XXXVI.

Short is my tale:—Fitz-Eustace' care
 A pierced and mangled body bare
 To moated Lichfield's lofty pile;
 And there, beneath the southern aisle,
 A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
 Did long Lord Marmion's image bear,
 (Now vainly for its sight you look;
 'Twas levell'd, when fanatic Brook
 The fair cathedral storm'd and took;⁷⁰
 But, thanks to Heaven, and good Saint Chad!
 A guerdon meet the spoiler had!)
 There erst was martial Marmion found,
 His feet upon a couchant hound,
 His hands to heaven upraised;
 And all around, on scutcheon rich,
 And table carved, and fretted niche,
 His arms and feats were blazed.
 And yet, though all was carved so far,
 And priest for Marmion breathed the prayer,
 The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
 From Ettrick woods, a peasant swain
 Follow'd his lord to Flodden plain,—
 One of those flowers, whom plaintive lay
 In Scotland mourns as "wede away;"
 Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
 And dragg'd him to its foot and died,
 Close by the noble Marmion's side,
 The spoilers stripp'd and gash'd the slain,
 And thus their corpses were mista'en;
 And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
 The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII.

Less easy task it were, to show
 Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and low.

They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
But every mark is gone;
Time's wasting hand has done away
The simple Cross of Sybil Gray;
And broke her font of stone;
But yet out from the little hill
Oozes the slender springlet still.
Oft halts the stranger there,
For thence may best his curious eye
The memorable field descry;
And shepherd boys repair
To seek the water-flag and rush,
And rest them by the hazel bush,
And plait their garlands fair;
Nor dream they sit upon the grave
That holds the bones of Marmion brave.—
When thou shalt find the little hill,
With thy heart commune, and be still.
If ever, in temptation strong,
Thou left'st the right path for the wrong;
If every devious step, thus trod,
Still led thee further from the road;
Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom
On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
But say, "He died a gallant knight,
With sword in hand for England's right."

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
Who cannot image to himself,
That, all through Flodden's dismal night,
Wilton was foremost in the fight;
That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hew'd,
Amid the spearman's stubborn wood:
Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
He was the living soul of all;
That, after fight, his faith made plain,
He won his rank and lands again;
And charged his old paternal shield
With bearings won on Flodden Field.
Nor sing I to that simple maid,
To whom it must in terms be said,
That King and kinsmen did agree,
To bless fair Clara's constancy:
Who cannot, unless I relate,
Paint to her mind the bridal's state;

That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
 More, Sands, and Denny, pass'd the joke:
 That Bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
 And Catherine's hand the stocking threw;
 And afterwards, for many a day,
 That it was held enough to say,
 In blessing to a wedding pair,
 "Love they like Wilton and like Clare!"

I' Embog.

TO THE READER.

WHY then a final note prolong;
 Or lengthen out a closing song,
 Unless to bid the gentles speed,
 Who long have listed to the rede?
 To Statesmen grave, if such may deign
 To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
 Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
 And patriotic heart—as PITT!
 A garland for the hero's crest,
 And twined by her he loves the best;
 To every lovely lady bright,
 What can I wish but faithful knight?
 To every faithful lover too,
 What can I wish but lady true?
 And knowledge to the studious sage;
 And pillow to the head of age.
 To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
 Has cheated of thy hour of play,
 Light task, and merry holiday!
 To all, to each, a fair good night,
 And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!

NOTES.

NOTE 1, Page 7.—“*Norham's castled steep.*”

The ruinous castle of Norham (anciently called Ubbonford) is situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, about six miles above Berwick, and where the river is still the boundary between England and Scotland. The extent of its ruins, as well as its historical importance, shows it to have been a place of magnificence, as well as strength. Edward I. resided there when he was created umpire of the dispute concerning the Scottish succession. It was repeatedly taken and retaken during the wars between England and Scotland. Norham Castle is situated on a steep bank which overhangs the river. In 1164, it was almost rebuilt by Hugh Pudsey, Bishop of Durham, who added a huge keep, or donjon; notwithstanding which, King Henry II. in 1174, took the castle from the bishop, and committed the keeping of it to William de Neville. After this period it seems to have been chiefly garrisoned by the King, and considered as a royal fortress. The Greys of Chillingham Castle were frequently the castellans, or captains of the garrison: yet, as the castle was situated in the patrimony of St Cuthbert, the property was in the see of Durham till the Reformation.

In a curious memoir of the Dacres on the state of Norham Castle in 1522, not long after the battle of Flodden, the inner ward, or keep, is represented as impregnable:—“The provisions are three great vats of salt eels, forty-four kibe, three hogsheads of salted salmon: forty quarters of grain, besides many cows, and four hundred sheep, lying under the castle-wall nightly; but a number of the arrows wanted feathers, and a good *Fletcher* [*i.e.*, maker of arrows] was required.”

The ruins of the castle are at present considerable, as well as picturesque.

NOTE 2, Page 7.—“*The battled towers, the donjon keep.*”

The *donjon* means the strongest part of a feudal castle; a high square tower, with walls of tremendous thickness, situated in the centre of the other buildings, from which, however, it was usually detached. Here, in case of the outward defences being gained, the garrison retreated to make their last stand. The donjon contained the great hall, and principal rooms of state for solemn occasions, and also the prison of the fortress.

NOTE 3, Page 9.—“*Mail and plate of Milan steel.*”

The artists of Milan were famous in the middle ages for their skill in armoury, as appears from the following passage, in which Froissart gives an account of the preparations made by Henry, Earl of Hereford, afterwards Henry IV., and Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marischal, for their proposed combat in the lists at Coventry:—“These two lords made ample provision of all things necessary for the combat; and the Earl of Derby sent off messengers to Lombardy, to have armour from Sir Galeas, Duke of Milan. The Duke complied with joy, and gave choice of all his armour.”—JONES' FROISSART, Vol. IV., p. 597.

NOTE 4, Page 9.—“*Who checks at me, to death is dight.*”

The crest and motto of Marmion are borrowed from the following story:—Sir David de Lindesay, first Earl of Crauford, was, among other gentlemen of quality, attended, during a visit to London in 1390, by Sir William Dalzell, who was not only excelling in wisdom, but also of a lively wit. Chancing to be at the court, he there saw Sir Piers Courtenay, an English knight, famous for skill in tilting and for the beauty of his person, parading the palace, arrayed in a new mantle, bearing for device an embroidered falcon, with this rhyme,—

“I bear a falcon, fairest of flight;
Whoso pinches at her, his death is dight,*
In graith.”†

The Scottish knight, being a wag, appeared next day in a dress exactly similar to that of Courtenay, but bearing a magpie instead of the falcon, with a motto ingeniously contrived to rhyme to the vaunting inscription of Sir Piers:—

“I bear a pie, picking at a piece;
Whoso picks at her, I shall pick at his nese,‡
In faith.”

This affront could only be expiated by a joust with sharp lances. In the course, Dalzell left his helmet unlaced, so that it gave way at the touch of his antagonist's lance, and he thus avoided the shock of the encounter. This happened twice: in the third encounter, the handsome Courtenay lost two of his front teeth. As the Englishman complained bitterly of Dalzell's fraud in not fastening his helmet, the Scottishman agreed to run six courses more, each champion staking in the hand of the king two hundred pounds, to be forfeited if, on entering the lists,

* Prepared.

† Armour.

‡ Nose.

any unequal advantage should be detected. This being agreed to, the wily Scot demanded that Sir Piers, in addition to the loss of his teeth, should consent to the extinction of one of his eyes, he himself having lost an eye in the fight of Otterburn. As Courtenay demurred to this equalization, Dalzell demanded the forfeit, which, after much altercation, the king appointed to be paid to him.

NOTE 5, Page 11.—“*Largesse, Largesse.*”

This was the cry with which heralds and pursuivants were wont to acknowledge the bounty received from the knights. The heralds, like the minstrels, were, as a rule, allowed to have great claims upon the liberality of the knights, of whose feasts they kept a record, and proclaimed, as in the text, upon suitable occasions. At Berwick, Norham, and other Border fortresses of importance, pursuivants usually resided, whose inviolable character rendered them the only persons that could, with assurance of safety, be sent on necessary embassies into Scotland.

NOTE 6, Page 11.—“*Lord Marmion.*”

Lord Marmion, the principal character of the present romance, is entirely a fictitious personage. In earlier times, indeed, the family of Marmion, Lords of Fontenay in Normandy, was highly distinguished. Robert de Marmion, Lord of Fontenay, was a distinguished follower of the Conqueror; obtained a grant of the castle and town of Tamworth, and also of the manor of Scrivelby, in Lincolnshire. One, or both, of these noble possessions, was held by the honourable service of being the Royal Champion, as the ancestors of Marmion had formerly been to the Dukes of Normandy. But after the castle and demesne of Tamworth had passed through four successive barons from Robert, the family became extinct in the person of Philip de Marmion, who died in 20th Edward I. without issue male. He was succeeded in his Castle of Tamworth by Alexander de Freville, who married Mazera, his grand-daughter. Baldwin de Freville, Alexander's descendant, in the reign of Richard I., by the supposed tenure of his Castle of Tamworth, claimed the office of Royal Champion, and to do the service appertaining; namely, on the day of coronation, to ride, completely armed, upon a barbed horse, into Westminster Hall, and there to challenge the combat against any one who would gainsay the king's title. But this office was adjudged to Sir John Dymoke, to whom the manor of Scrivelby had descended by another of the co-heiresses of Robert de Marmion; and it remains in that family, whose representative is Hereditary Champion of England at the present day.

NOTE 7, Page 12.—“*Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud.*”

This old Northumbrian ballad was taken down from the recitation of a woman eighty years of age, mother of one of the miners in Alston-moor, by the agent for the land mines there. She had not, she said, heard it for many years; but when she was a girl, it used to be sung at merry-making, “till the roof rung again.” The ludicrous turns given in this rude rhyme to the slaughter, marks that wild and disorderly state of society, in which a murder was not merely a casual circumstance, but, in some cases, an exceedingly good jest.

NOTE 8, Page 14.—“*Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit.*”

The story of Perkin Warbeck, or Richard, Duke of York, is well known. In 1496, he was received honourably in Scotland; and James IV., after conferring upon him in marriage his own relation, the Lady Catherine Gordon, made war on England in behalf of his pretensions. To retaliate an invasion of England, Surrey advanced into Berwickshire at the head of considerable forces, but retreated, after taking the inconsiderable fortress of Ayton.

NOTE 9, Page 14.—“*Driven the bees of Lauderdale.*”

The garrisons of the English Castles of Wark, Norham, and Berwick, were, as may be easily supposed, very troublesome neighbours to Scotland. Sir Richard Maitland of Ledington wrote a poem, called “*The Blind Baron's Comfort*,” when his barony of Blythe, in Lauderdale, was *harried* by Rowland Foster, the English captain of Wark, with his company, to the number of 300 men. “*Light to set their snoods*,” is a phrase by which the Borderers jocularly intimated the burning of a house. When the Maxwells, in 1685, burned the Castle of Lochwood, they said they did so to give Lady Johnstone “*light to set her snood.*”

NOTE 10, Page 15.—“*The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein.*”

This churchman seems to have been akin to Welsh, the vicar of St Thomas of Exeter, a leader among the Cornish insurgents in 1549. “*This man*,” says Holinshed, “*had many good things in him. He was of no great stature, but well set, and mightilie compact: he was a very good wrestler; shot well, both in the long bow and also in the cross-bow; he handled his hand-gun and peece very well; he was a very good woodman, and a hardie, and such a one as would not give his head for the polling, or his beard for the washing.*” This model of clerical talents had the misfortune to be hanged upon the steeple of his own church.

NOTE 11, Page 16.—“*Friar John.*”

Friar John understood the soporific virtue of his beads and breviary, as well as his namesake in Rabelais. “But Gargantua could not sleep by any means, on which side soever he turned himself. Whereupon the monk said to him, ‘I never sleep soundly but when I am at sermon or prayers: Let us begin, you and I, the seven penitential psalms, to try whether you shall not quickly fall asleep.’”

NOTE 12, Page 16.—“*Saint Rosalie retired to God.*”

“Sante Rosalia was of Polermo, and born of a very noble family, and when very young, abhorred so much the vanities of this world, and avoided the converse of mankind, resolving to dedicate herself wholly to God Almighty, that she, by divine inspiration, forsook her father's house, and never was more heard of till her body was found in the cleft of a rock, on that almost inaccessible mountain, where now the chapel is built; and they affirm she was carried up there by the hands of angels.”—*Voyage to Sicily and Malta*, by Mr John Dryden (son to the poet), p. 107.

NOTE 13, Page 17.—“*The summon'd Palmer came in place.*”

A *Palmer*, opposed to a *Pilgrim*, was one who made it his sole business to visit holy shrines, travelling incessantly, and subsisting by charity; whereas the *Pilgrim* retired to his usual home and occupations when he had paid his devotions at the particular spot which was the object of his pilgrimage. The *Palmer*s seem to have been the *Questionarii* of the ancient Scottish canons 1242 and 1296.

NOTE 14, Page 18.—“*Where good Saint Rule.*”

St Regulus (*Scotticè*, St Rule), a monk of Patræ, in Achaia, warned by a vision, is said, A.D. 370, to have sailed westward, until he landed at St Andrews, in Scotland, where he founded a chapel and tower. The latter is still standing; and is certainly one of the most ancient edifices in Scotland. A cave, nearly fronting the ruinous castle of St Andrews, bears the name of this religious person. It is difficult of access; and the rock in which it is hewn is washed by the German Ocean. It is nearly round, about ten feet in diameter, and the same in height. On one side is a sort of stone altar; on the other, an aperture into an inner den, where the miserable ascetic, who inhabited this dwelling, probably slept. At full tide, egress and regress are hardly practicable. As Regulus first colonized the metropolitan See of Scotland, and converted the inhabitants in the vicinity, he has some reason to complain that the ancient name of Killrule (*Cella Reguli*) should have been superseded, even in favour of the tutelar saint of Scotland.

NOTE 15, Page 19.—“*—— Saint Fillan's blessed well.*”

St Fillan was a Scottish saint of some reputation, and the common people still retain some of the superstitions connected with it. There are in Perthshire several wells and springs dedicated to St Fillan. They are held powerful in cases of madness; and, in some of late occurrence, lunatics have been left all night bound to the holy stone, in confidence that the saint would cure and unloose them before morning.

NOTE 16, Page 20.—“*St Cuthbert's Holy Isle.*”

The Abbey of Whitby, was founded A.D. 657, in consequence of a vow of Oswy, King of Northumberland. It contained both monks and nuns of the Benedictine order; but the abbess was superior to the abbot. The monastery was afterwards ruined by the Danes, and rebuilt by William Percy in the reign of the Conqueror. The ruins of Whitby Abbey are very magnificent.

Lindisfarne, an isle on the coast of Northumberland, was called Holy Island, from the sanctity of its ancient monastery, and from its having been the Episcopal seat of the See of Durham during the early ages of British Christianity. A succession of holy men held that office: but their merits were swallowed up in the superior fame of St Cuthbert, who was sixth Bishop of Durham, and who bestowed the name of his “patrimony” upon the extensive property of the See. The ruins of the monastery upon Holy Island betoken great antiquity. Lindisfarne is not properly an island, but rather, as the venerable Bede has termed it, a semi-isle; for although surrounded by the sea at full tide, the ebb leaves the sands dry between it and the coast of Northumberland, from which it is about three miles distant.

NOTE 17, Page 25.—“*Barons bold must menial service do.*”

“In the fifth year of the reign of Henry II., after the conquest of England by William, Duke of Normandy, the Lord of Uglebarnby, then called William de Bruce; the Lord of Smeaton, called Ralph de Percy; with a gentleman and freeholder called Allatson, did, on the 16th of October, 1159, appoint to meet and hunt the wild boar, in a certain wood, or desert place, belonging to the abbot of Whitby; the place's name was Esk-dale-side, and the abbot's name was Sedman. Then these young gentlemen being met, with their hounds and boar-staves; and having there found a great wild boar, the hounds ran him well-nigh near about the chapel and hermitage of Eck-dale-side, where was a monk of Whitby, who was an hermit. The boar being very sorely pursued, and did run, took in at the chapel door, then laid him down, and presently died. The gentlemen, in the thick of

the wood, being put behind their game, followed the cry of their hounds, and so came to the hermitage, calling on the hermit, who opened the door, and came forth; and within they found the boar lying dead: for which, the gentlemen, in a very great fury, because the hounds were put from their game, did most violently and cruelly run at the hermit with their boar staves, whereby he soon after died. Thereupon the gentlemen, perceiving and knowing that they were in peril of death, took sanctuary at Scarborough; but at that time the abbot, being in very great favour with the king, removed them out of the sanctuary, whereby they came in danger of the law, and not to be privileged, but likely to have the severity of the law, which was death for death. But the hermit being a holy and devout man, and at the point of death, sent for the abbot, and desired him to plead for the gentlemen who had wounded him. The abbot so doing, the gentlemen came; and the hermit lying, very sick and weak, said unto them, 'I am sure to die of those wounds you have given me.' The abbot answered, 'They shall as surely die for the same.' But the hermit answered, 'Not so, for I will freely forgive them my death, if they will be content to be enjoined the penance I shall lay on them for the safeguard of their souls.' The gentlemen, being present, bade him save their lives. Then said the hermit, 'You and yours shall hold your lands of the abbot of Whitby, and his successors, in this manner:—That upon Ascension-day, you, or some of you, shall come to the wood of the Stray-sands at sun-rising; the abbot's officer will blow his horn, and deliver unto you stakes, stowers, and yethers, to be cut by you with a knife of one penny price; and to be taken on your backs, and carried to the town of Whitby, and to be there before nine of the clock the same day before-mentioned. Each of you shall set your stake to the brim, and so yether them, and so stake with your stout stowers, that they may stand three tides' force. You shall faithfully do this, in remembrance that you did most cruelly slay me; and that you may the better call to God for mercy.'"

NOTE 18, Page 25.—"*The lovely Edelfled.*"

She was the daughter of King Oswy, who, in gratitude to Heaven for the great victory which he won in 655, against Penda, the Pagan King of Mercia, dedicated Edelfleda, then but a year old, to the service of God, in the monastery of Whitby, of which St Hilda was then abbess.

NOTE 19, Page 25.—"*Changed into a coil of stone.*"

These two miracles are much insisted upon by all ancient writers who have occasion to mention either Whitby or St Hilda. The relics of the snakes which infested the precincts of the convent, and were, at the abbess's prayer, not only beheaded, but petrified, are still found among the rocks, and are termed by Protestants fossilists, *Ammonites*.

The miracle mentioned by Camden "is ascribed to the power of her sanctity, that these wild geese, which, in the winter, fly in great flocks to the lakes and rivers unfrozen in the southern parts, fall down suddenly upon the ground, when they are in their flight over certain neighbouring fields hereabouts." The geese, it is almost unnecessary to add, have now forgot their obeisance to Saint Hilda, or their antipathy to the soil, and fly over Whitby with as little difficulty as anywhere else.

NOTE 20, Page 25.—"*His body's resting-place of old.*"

St Cuthbert was, in the choice of his sepulchre, one of the most notable and unreasonable saints in the Calendar. He died A.D. 688, in a hermitage upon the Farne Islands, having resigned the bishopric of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, about two years before.* His body was brought to Lindisfarne, where it remained until a descent of the Danes, about 793, when the monastery was nearly destroyed. The monks fled to Scotland with what they deemed their chief treasure, the relics of St Cuthbert. The Saint was, however, a most capricious fellow-traveller; which was the more intolerable, as, like Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea, he journeyed upon the shoulders of his companions. They paraded him through Scotland for several years, and came as far west as Whithorn. He at length made a halt at Norham; from thence he went to Melrose, where he remained stationary for a short time, and then caused himself to be launched upon the Tweed in a stone coffin, which landed him at Tilmouth, in Northumberland. This boat is finely shaped, ten feet long, three and a-half in diameter, and only four inches thick; so that, with very little assistance, it might certainly have swam. It lay, a few years ago, in two pieces, beside the ruined chapel of Tilmouth. From Tilmouth, Cuthbert wandered into Yorkshire; and at length made a long stay at Chester-le-Street. At length, the Danes continuing to infest the country, the monks removed to Ripon; and in returning from thence to Chester-le-Street, passing through a part called Deanholme, the Saint and his carriage became immoveable at a place named Wardilaw. Here the Saint chose his place of

* He resumed the bishopric of Lindisfarne, which, owing to bad health, he again relinquished three months before his death.—RAINE'S ST CUTHBERT.

residence, and he evinced taste in at length fixing it. It is said that the Northumbrian Catholics still keep secret the precise spot of the Saint's sepulchre, which is only intimated to three persons at a time. On 17th May, 1827, 1139 years after his death, their discovery and disinterment were effected. Under a blue stone, in the middle of the shrine of St Cuthbert, at the eastern extremity of the choir of Durham Cathedral, there was then found a walled grave, containing the coffins of the Saint. The first, or outer one, was ascertained to be that of 1541, the second of 1041; the third, or inner one, answering in every particular to the description of that of 698, was found to contain the entire skeleton of the Saint; the bottom of the grave being perfectly dry, free from offensive smell, and without the slightest symptom that a human body had ever undergone decomposition within its walls. The skeleton was found swathed in five silk robes of emblematical embroidery, the ornamental parts laid with gold-leaf, and these again covered with a robe of linen. Beside it were several gold and silver *insignia*, and other relics of the Saint.

NOTE 21, Page 27.—“*Old Colwulf.*”

Ceolwulf, or Colwulf, King of Northumberland, flourished in the eighth century. The venerable Bede dedicates to him his *Ecclesiastical History*. He abdicated the throne about 738, and retired to Holy Island, where he died in the odour of sanctity. It is recorded among his *memorabilia*, that, finding the air of the island raw and cold, he indulged the monks, whose rule had hitherto confined them to milk or water, with the comfortable privilege of using wine or ale. These penitential-vaults were the *Geisselgewolbe* of German convents. In the darker and more rigid times of monastic discipline, they were sometimes used as a cemetery for the lay benefactors of the convent, whose unsanctified corpses were then seldom permitted to pollute the choir. They also served as places of meeting for the chapter when measures of uncommon severity were to be adopted.

NOTE 22, Page 28.—“*Tynemouth's haughty Prioress.*”

That there was an ancient priory at Tynemouth is certain. Its ruins are situated on a high rocky point; and, doubtless, many a vow was made to the shrine by the distressed mariners who drove towards the iron-bound coast of Northumberland in stormy weather. It was anciently a nunnery; for Virca, abbess of Tynemouth, presented St Cuthbert (yet alive) with a rare winding-sheet, in emulation of a holy lady called Tuda, who had sent him a coffin. The nunnery at Holy Island is altogether fictitious. Indeed, St Cuthbert was unlikely to permit such an establishment; for, notwithstanding his accepting the mortuary gifts above-mentioned, and his carrying on a visiting acquaintance with the Abbess of Coldingham, he certainly hated the whole female sex; and, in revenge of a slippery trick played to him by an Irish princess, he, after death, inflicted severe penances on such as presumed to approach within a certain distance of his shrine.

NOTE 23, Page 30.—“*On those the wall was to enclose.*”

It is well known that the religious, who broke their vows of chastity, were subjected to the same penalty as the Roman vestals in a similar case. A small niche, sufficient to enclose their bodies, was made in the massive wall of the convent; a slender pittance of food and water was deposited in it; and the awful words, VADE IN PACE,* were the signal for immuring the criminal. In latter times, this punishment was often resorted to; but, among the ruins of the Abbey of Coldingham, were some years ago discovered the remains of a female skeleton, which, from the shape of the niche, and position of the figure, seemed to be that of an immured nun.

NOTE 24, Page 35.—“*The village inn.*”

The accommodations of a Scottish hostelry, or inn, in the 16th century, may be collected from Dunbar's admirable tale of The Friars of Berwick. Simon Lawder, “the gay ostler,” seems to have lived very comfortably; and his wife decorated her person with a scarlet kirtle, and a belt of silk and silver, and rings upon her fingers, feasted her paramour with rabbits, capons, partridges, and Bordeaux wine. At least, if the Scottish inns were not good, it was not for want of encouragement from the legislature, who, so early as the reign of James I., not only enacted, that in all boroughs and fairs there be hostellaries, having stables and chambers, and provision for man and horse, but by another statute, ordained that no man, travelling on horse or foot, should presume to lodge anywhere except in these hostellaries; and that no person, save innkeepers, should receive such travellers, under the penalty of forty shillings, for exercising such hospitality.†

NOTE 25, Page 39.—“*The death of a dear friend.*”

Among other omens to which faithful credit is given among the Scottish peasantry, is what is called the “dead-bell,” explained by James Hogg to be that tinkling in the ears which the country people regard as the secret intelligence of some friend's decease. He tells a story to the purpose in the “Mountain Bard.”

* “Not *part in peace*, but *go into peace*, or into eternal rest, a pretty intelligible mittimus to another world.” † Jas. I., Parliament I., c. 24: Parliament III., c. 56.

NOTE 26, Page 42.—“*The Goblin-Hall.*”

A vaulted hall under the ancient castle of Gifford or Yester, the construction of which has, from a very remote period, been ascribed to magic. The Statistical Account of the Parish of Garvald and Baro relates that, “Upon a peninsula, formed by the water of Hopes on the east, and a large rivulet on the west, stands the ancient castle of Yester. Sir David Dalrymple, in his Annals, relates, that ‘Hugh Gifford de Yester died in 1267; that in his castle there was a capacious cavern, formed by magical art, and called in the country Bo-Hall, i.e., Hobgoblin Hall.’ A stair of twenty-four steps led to this apartment, which is a large and spacious hall, with an arched roof; and though it hath stood for so many centuries, and been exposed to the external air for a period of fifty or sixty years, it is still as firm and entire as if it had only stood a few years. From the floor of this hall, another stair of thirty-six steps leads down to a pit which hath a communication with Hopes-water. A great part of the walls of this large and ancient castle are still standing. There is a tradition that the castle of Yester was the last fortification, in this country, that surrendered to General Gray, sent into Scotland by Protector Somerset.” In 1737, the Goblin Hall was tenanted by the Marquis of Tweeddale’s falconer.

NOTE 27, Page 42.—“*There floated Haco’s banner trim.*”

In 1263, Haco, King of Norway, came into the Frith of Clyde with a powerful armament, and made a descent at Largs, in Ayrshire. Here he was encountered and defeated, on the 2d October, by Alexander III. Haco retreated to Orkney, where he died soon after this disgrace to his arms.

NOTE 28, Page 42.—“*His wizard habit strange.*”

“Magicians, as is well known, were very curious in the choice and form of their vestments. Their caps are oval, like pyramids, with lappets on each side, and fur within. Their gowns are long, and furred with fox-skins, under which they have a linen garment, reaching to the knee. Their girdles are three inches broad, and have many cabalistical names, with crosses, trines, and circles inscribed on them. Their shoes should be of new russet leather, with a cross cut upon them. Their knives are dagger fashion; and their swords have neither guard nor scabbard.”—REGINALD SCOTT, *WITCHCRAFT*, edition 166.

NOTE 29, Page 42.—“*Upon his breast a pentacle.*”

“A pentacle is a piece of fine linen, folded with five corners, according to the five senses, and suitably inscribed with characters. This the magician extends towards the spirits which he invokes, when they are rebellious, and refuse to be conformable unto the ceremonies and rites of magic.”—SCOTT’S *WITCHCRAFT*, p. 66.

NOTE 30, Page 43.—“*As born upon that blessed night.*”

It is a popular article of faith, that those who are born on Christmas, or Good Friday, have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them. The Spaniards imputed the haggard and downcast looks of their Philip II. to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him.

NOTE 31, Page 45.—“*The Elfin Warrior doth wield.*”

Gervase of Tilbury (*Otia Imperial ap. Script. rer. Brunsvic*, vol. i., p. 797) relates the following popular story concerning a fairy knight:—“Osbert, a bold and powerful baron, visited a noble family in the vicinity of Wandlebury, in the bishopric of Ely. Among other stories related in the social circle of his friends, he was informed, that if any knight, unattended, entered an adjacent plain by moonlight, and challenged an adversary to appear, he would be encountered by a spirit in the form of a knight. Osbert resolved to make the experiment, and set out, attended by a single squire, whom he ordered to remain without the limits of the plain, which was surrounded by an ancient intrenchment. On repeating the challenge, he was instantly assailed by an adversary, whom he quickly unhorsed, and seized the reins of his steed. During this operation, his ghostly opponent sprung up, and darting his spear, like a javelin, at Osbert, wounded him in the thigh. Osbert returned in triumph with the horse, which he committed to the care of his servants. The horse was of a sable colour, as well as his whole accoutrements, and apparently of great beauty and vigour. He remained with his keeper till cock-crowing, when, with eyes flashing fire, he reared, spurned the ground, and vanished. On disarming himself, Osbert perceived that he was wounded, and that one of his steel boots was full of blood.” Gervase adds, that “as long as he lived, the scar of his wound opened afresh on the anniversary of the eve on which he encountered the spirit.” Less fortunate was the gallant Bohemian knight, who, travelling by night with a single companion, “came in sight of a fairy host, arrayed under displayed banners. Despising the remonstrances of his friend, the knight pricked forward to break a lance with a champion, who advanced from the ranks apparently in defiance. His companion beheld the Bohemian overthrown, horse and

man, by his aerial adversary; and returning to the spot next morning, he found the corpses of the knight and steed."—*HIERARCHY OF BLESSED ANGELS*, p. 554.

NOTE 32, Page 49.—"*Friar Rush*."

Alias, "Will o' the Wisp." This personage is a strolling demon, or *esprit follet*, who, once upon a time, got admittance into a monastery as a scullion, and played the monks many pranks. He was also a sort of Robin Goodfellow, and Jack o' Lanthorn. It is in allusion to this demon that Milton's clown speaks—

"She was pinched, and pulled, she said,

And he by *Friar's lanthorn* led."

The "History of Friar Rush" is of extreme rarity, and, for some time, even the existence of such a book was doubted, although it is expressly alluded to by Reginald Scott, in his "Discovery of Witchcraft."

NOTE 33, Page 52.—"*Sir David Lindesay of the Mount*."

Sir David Lindesay was well known for his early efforts in favour of reformed doctrines; and, indeed, his play, coarse as it now seems, must have had a powerful effect upon the people of his age. I am uncertain if I abuse poetical licence, by introducing Sir David Lindesay in the character of Lion-Herald, sixteen years before he obtained that office. It was often an office imposed on the Lion king-at-arms, to receive foreign ambassadors. The oath of the Lion, in its first article, bears reference to his frequent employment upon royal weddings and embassies. The office of herald, in feudal times, being held of the utmost importance, the inauguration of the Kings-at-arms, who presided over their colleges, was proportionally solemn; it was the mimicry of a royal coronation, except that the unction was made with wine instead of oil. In Scotland, a namesake and kinsman of Sir David Lindesay, inaugurated in 1592, "was crowned by King James with the ancient crown of Scotland, which was used before the Scottish kings assumed a close crown;" and dined at the King's table, wearing the crown. So sacred was the herald's office, that, in 1515, Lord Drummond was by Parliament declared guilty of treason, and his lands forfeited, because he had struck the Lion King-at-arms, when he reproved him for his follies. Nor was he restored, but at the Lion's earnest solicitation.

NOTE 34, Page 53.—"*Crichton Castle*."

A large ruinous castle on the banks of the Tyne, about ten miles from Edinburgh. As indicated in the text, it was built at different times, and with a very differing regard to splendour and accommodation. The oldest part of the building is a narrow keep, or tower, such as formed the mansion of a lesser Scottish baron. The eastern front of the court is raised above a portico, and decorated with entablatures, bearing anchors. All the stones of this front are cut into diamond facets, the angular projections of which have an uncommonly rich appearance. The inside of this part of the building appears to have contained a gallery of great length, and uncommon elegance. Access was given to it by a magnificent staircase, now quite destroyed. The soffits are ornamented with twining cordage and rosettes, and the whole seems to have been far more splendid than was usual in Scottish castles. The castle belonged originally to the Chancellor, Sir William Crichton, and probably owed to him its first enlargement, as well as its being taken by the Earl of Douglas, who imputed to Crichton's counsels the death of his predecessor, Earl William, beheaded in Edinburgh Castle, with his brother, in 1440. In 1483, it was garrisoned by Lord Crichton, then its proprietor, against King James III., whose displeasure he had incurred by seducing his sister Margaret, in revenge, it is said, for the monarch having dishonoured his bed. From the Crichton family the castle passed to that of the Hepburns, Earls of Bothwell. There are very few ruins in Scotland which display so well the style and beauty of ancient castle-architecture. The castle of Crichton has a dungeon-vault, called the *Massy More*.

NOTE 35, Page 54.—"*Earl Adam Hepburn*."

He was the second Earl of Bothwell, and fell in the field of Flodden, where, according to an ancient English poet, he distinguished himself by a furious attempt made to retrieve the day:—

"Then on the Scottish part, right proud,
The Earl of Bothwell then out brast,
And stepping forth, with stomach good,
Into the enemies' throng he thrast;
And *Bothwell! Bothwell!* cried bold,
To cause his souldiers to ensue,
But there he caught a wellcome cold,
The Englishmen straight down him threw.
Thus Haburn through his hardy heart
His fatal fine in conflict found," etc.—*Flodden Field: a Poem*.

Adam was grandfather to James, Earl of Bothwell, too well known in the history of Queen Mary.

NOTE 48, Page 70.—“*Sir Hugh the Heron's wife.*”

It has been already noticed (see note to Stanza xiii. of Canto i.) that King James's acquaintance with Lady Heron of Ford did not commence until he marched into England. Our historians impute to the King's infatuated passion the delays which led to the fatal defeat of Flodden. Heron of Ford had been, in 1511, in some sort accessory to the slaughter of Sir Robert Ker of Cessford, Warden of the Middle Marshes. It was committed by his brother the bastard, Lilburn, and Starked, three Borderers. Lilburn and Heron of Ford were delivered up by Henry to James, and were imprisoned in the fortress of Fast Castle, where the former died. Part of the pretence of Lady Ford's negotiations with James, was the liberty of her husband.

NOTE 49, Page 71.—“*The fair Queen of France.*”

“Also the Queen of France wrote a love-letter to the King of Scotland, calling him her love, showing him that she had suffered much rebuke in France for the defending of his honour. She believed surely that he would recompense her again with some of his kingly support in her necessity; that is to say, that he would raise her an army, and come three foot of ground on English ground for her sake. To that effect she sent him a ring off her finger, with fourteen thousand French crowns to pay his expenses.”—*Pitscottie*, p. 110. A torquis ring; probably this fatal gift is, with James's sword and dagger, preserved in the College of Heralds, London.

NOTE 50, Page 74.—“*Archibald Bell-the-Cat.*”

Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, a man remarkable for strength of body and mind, acquired the popular name of *Bell-the-Cat*, upon the following remarkable occasion:—James the Third, of whom Pitscottie complains that he delighted more in music and “policies of building,” than in hunting, hawking, and other noble exercises, and was so ill advised as to make favourites of his architects and musicians, whom the same historian irreverently terms “masons and fiddlers.” His nobility were incensed at the honours conferred on those persons, particularly on Cochrane, a mason, who had been created Earl of Mar; and seizing the opportunity, when in 1482 the King had convoked the whole array of the country to march against the English, they held a midnight council in the Church of Lauder, for the purpose of forcibly removing these minions from the King's person. Lord Gray told the assembly the apologue of the Mice, who had formed a resolution, that it would be highly advantageous to their community to tie a bell round the cat's neck, that they might hear her approach at a distance; but which public measure unfortunately miscarried, from no mouse being willing to undertake the task of fastening the bell. “I understand the moral,” said Angus, “and I will *bell the cat.*” Cochrane came from the King to the Council, and was so proud in his conceit, that he counted no lords to be marrows to him, therefore he racked rudely at the council door. Sir Robert Douglas, Laird of Loch-Leven, enquired who that was that knocked so rudely? and Cochrane answered—“This is I, the Earl of Mar.” Then the Earl of Angus past to the door, met the Earl of Mar as he came in, pulled the golden chain from his craig, and said to him, a tow rope would set him better. Sir Robert Douglas syne pulled the blazing horn from him in like manner, and said, ‘He had been the hunter of mischief over lang.’ This Cochrane asked, ‘My Lords, is it mows (jest, or earnest?)’ They answered, and said, ‘It is good earnest, and so thou shalt find; for thou and thy accomplices have wheesed our prince this lang time.’ . . . Meantime they brought forth Cochrane, and his hands bound with a tow, who desired them to take one of his pallion-tows and bind his hands, for he thought shame to have his hands bound with such tow of hemp, like a thief. The lords answered, he was a traitor; he deserved no better; and, for despatch, they took a hair-tether halter, and hanged him over the bridge of Lawder, above the rest of his accomplices.”—*PITSCOTTIE*, p. 78, Fol. Edition.

NOTE 51, Page 74.—“*Against the war had Angus stood.*”

Angus was an old man when the war against England was resolved upon. He earnestly spoke against that measure from its commencement; and, on the eve of the battle of Flodden, remonstrated so freely upon the impolicy of fighting, that the king said to him, with scorn and indignation, “If he was afraid, he might go home.” The Earl burst into tears at this insupportable insult, and retired accordingly, leaving his sons George, Master of Angus, and Sir William of Glenbervie, to command his followers. They were both slain in the battle, with two hundred gentlemen of the name of Douglas. The aged earl, broken-hearted at the calamities of his house and his country, retired into a religious house, where he died about a year after the field of Flodden.

NOTE 52, Page 74.—“*Tantallon Hold.*”

The ruins of Tantallon Castle occupy a high rock projecting into the German Ocean, about two miles east of North Berwick. The building formed a principal castle of the Douglas family, and when the Earl of Angus was banished, in 1527, it continued to hold out against James V. The king went in person against it,

and for its reduction, borrowed from the Castle of Dunbar, then belonging to the Duke of Albany, two great cannons, "Thrawn-mouth'd Meg and her Marrow;" also, "two great botcards and two moyan, two double falcons and four quarter falcons." Yet, notwithstanding all this apparatus, James was forced to raise the siege. When the Earl of Angus returned from banishment, upon the death of James, he again obtained possession of Tantallon, and it actually afforded refuge to an English ambassador, the celebrated Sir Ralph Sadler, who resided there for some time under Angus's protection, after the failure of his negotiation for matching the infant Mary with Edward VI. He says—"That though this place was poorly furnished, it was of such strength as might warrant him against the motives of his enemies, and that he now thought himself out of danger. There is a military tradition, that the old Scotch-March was meant to express the words, '*Ding down, Tantallon, mak a brig to the Bass.*'"

NOTE 53, Page 74.—"*Their motto on his blade.*"

A very ancient sword in possession of Lord Douglas, bears, among a great deal of flourishing, two hands pointing to a heart, which is placed betwixt them, and the date 1329, being the year in which Bruce charged the good Lord Douglas to carry his heart to the Holy Land. The following lines (the first couplet of which is quoted by Godscroft, on a popular saying in his time) are inscribed around the emblem:—

"So many guid as of ye Douglas beine,
Of ane surname, was ne'er in Scotland seine,
I will ye charge, efter yat I depart,
To holy greave, and thair bury my hart;
Let it remane ever *Bothe Tyme and Hour*,
To ye last day I sie my Saviour.
I do protest, in tyme of all my ringe,
Ye lyk subject had never ony Keing."

This curious and valuable relique was nearly lost during the Civil War of 1745-6, being carried away from Douglas Castle by some of those in arms for Prince Charles. But great interest having been made by the Duke of Douglas among the chief partizans of Stuart, it was at length restored. It resembles a Highland claymore, of the usual size, is of an excellent temper, and admirably poised.

NOTE 54, Page 78.—"*Martin Swart.*"

A German General, who commanded the auxiliaries sent by the Duchess of Burgundy with Lambert Simnel. He was defeated and killed at Stokefield. There were songs about him long current in England.—See RITSON'S ANCIENT SONGS, 1792, p. lxi.

NOTE 55, Page 78.—"*Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerred.*"

It was early necessary for those who felt themselves obliged to believe in the divine judgment being annunciated in the trial by duel, to find salvos for the strange and obviously precarious chances of the combat. Various curious creative shifts, used by those who took up an unrighteous quarrel, were supposed sufficient to convert it into a just one. Thus, in the romance of "Amys and Amelion," the one brother in arms, fighting for the other, disguised in his arms, swears that *he* did not commit the crime of which the Steward, his antagonist, truly, though maliciously, accused him whom he represented.

NOTE 56, Page 81.—"*Dun-Edin's Cross.*"

The Cross of Edinburgh was an ancient and curious structure. The lower part was an octagonal tower, sixteen feet in diameter, and about fifteen feet high. At each angle there was a pillar, and between them an arch of the Grecian shape. Above these was a projecting battlement, with a turret at each corner, and medallions, of rude but curious workmanship, between them. Above this rose the proper Cross, a column of one stone, upwards of twenty feet high, surmounted with a unicorn. This pillar is preserved in the grounds of the property of Drum, near Edinburgh. The magistrates of Edinburgh, in 1756, with consent of the Lords of Session, (*proh pudor!*) destroyed this curious monument, under a wanton pretext, that it encumbered the street. From the tower of the Cross the heralds published the Acts of Parliament; and its site, marked by radii, diverging from a stone centre in the High Street, is still the place where proclamations are made.

NOTE 57, Page 81.—"*This awful summons came.*"

This supernatural citation is mentioned by all our Scottish historians. It was, probably, like the apparition at Linlithgow, an attempt, by those averse to the war, to impose upon the superstitious temper of James IV. Plotcock, or Plutock, is no other than Pluto. The Christians of the middle ages by no means disbelieved in the existence of the heathen deities; they only considered them as devils; and Plotcock, so far from implying anything fabulous, was a synonym of

the grand enemy of mankind—"According to Pitscottie, all their warnings, and uncouth tidings, nor in good counsel, might stop the King at this present from his vain purpose and wicked enterprise, but hastened him first to Edinburgh, and there to make his provision and furnishing, in having forth of his army against the day appointed, that they should meet in the Burrow-muir of Edinburgh. In this meantime, when they were taking forth their artillery, and the King being in the Abbey for the time, there was a cry heard at the Market Cross of Edinburgh, at the hour of midnight, proclaiming, as it had been a summons which was named and called by the proclaimer thereof: *The Summons of Plotcock*; which desired all men to compear, both Earl, and Lord, and Baron, and all honest gentlemen within the town (every man specified by his own name) to compear, within the space of forty days, before his master, where it should happen him to appoint, and be for the time under the pain of disobedience."

NOTE 58, Page 83.—"*Before a venerable pile.*"

The convent was a foundation of Cistercian nuns, near North Berwick, of which there are still some remains. It was founded by Duncan, Earl of Fife, in 1216.

NOTE 59, Page 85.—"*Drove the Monks forth of Coventry.*"

This relates to the catastrophe of a real Robert de Marmion, in the reign of King Stephen, whom William of Newbury describes with some attributes of my fictitious hero: "*Homo bellicosus, ferocia, et astucia fere nullo suo tempore impar.*" This Baron, having expelled the monks from the church of Coventry, was not long of experiencing the Divine judgment, as the same monks, no doubt, termed his disaster. Having waged a feudal war with the Earl of Chester, Marmion's horse fell; as he charged in the van of his troop against a body of the Earl's followers: the riders thigh being broken by the fall, his head was cut off by a common foot-soldier, ere he could receive any succour.

NOTE 60, Page 90.—"*Hovering upon the sunny air.*"

"It is the constant opinion that Lady Hilda still renders herself visible, on some occasions, in the Abbey of Streamshaks. In the summer months, at ten or eleven in the forenoon, the sunbeams fall in the inside of the northern part of the choir; and the spectators, who stand on the west side of Whitby Churchyard, so as just to see the most northerly part of the Abbey, past the north end of Whitby Church, imagine they perceive, in one of the highest windows there, the resemblance of a woman arrayed in a shroud, before which the papists offer up their prayers with as much zeal and devotion, as before any other image of their most glorified saints."—CHARLTON'S HISTORY OF WHITBY, p. 33.

NOTE 61, Page 95.—"*A bishop by the altar stood.*"

Gawain Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, son of Archibald Bell-the-Cat, Earl of Angus: was author of a Scottish metrical version of the *Æneid*, and of other poetical pieces of merit. He had not at this period attained the mitre.

NOTE 62, Page 95.—"*— the huge and sweeping brand.*"

Angus had strength and personal activity corresponding to his courage. Spens of Kilspindie, a favourite of James IV., having spoken of him lightly, the earl met him while hawking, and, compelling him to single combat, at one blow cut asunder his thigh-bone, and killed him on the spot. But ere he could obtain James's pardon for this slaughter, Angus was obliged to yield his castle of Hermitage, in exchange for that of Bothwell, which was some diminution to the family greatness. The sword with which he struck so remarkable a blow was presented by his descendant James, Earl of Morton, afterwards Regent of Scotland, to Lord Lindesay of the Byres, when he defied Bothwell to single combat on Carberry Hill.

NOTE 63, Page 97.—"*And lopest thou hence unscathed to go?*"

This ellulition of violence in the potent Earl of Angus is not without its example in the real history of the house of Douglas, whose chieftains possessed the ferocity, with the heroic virtues, of a savage state. The most curious instance occurred in the case of Maclellan, Tutor of Bombie, who, having refused to acknowledge the pre-eminence claimed by Douglas over the gentlemen and barons of Galloway, was seized and imprisoned by the earl, in his castle of the Thrieve, on the borders of Kirkcudbrightshire. Sir Patrick Gray, commander of King James the Second's guard, was uncle to the Tutor of Bombie, and obtained from the King "a sweet letter of supplication," praying the earl to deliver his prisoner into Gray's hand. When Sir Patrick arrived at the castle, he was received with all the honour due to a favourite of the King's household; but while he was at dinner, the earl, who suspected his errand, caused his prisoner to be led forth and beheaded. After dinner, Sir Patrick presented the King's letter to the earl, who received it with great affectation of reverence; "and took him by the hand, and led him forth to the green, where the gentleman was lying dead, and shewed him the manner, and said, 'Sir Patrick, you are come a little too late; yonder is your sister's son lying,

but he wants the head: take his body, and do with it what you will.'—Sir Patrick answered again, with a sore heart, and said, 'My lord, if ye have taken from him his head, dispoise upon the body as ye please;' and with that called for his horse, and leaped thereon; and when he was on horseback, he said to the earl in this manner, 'My lord, if I live, you shall be rewarded for your labours that you have used at this time, according to your demerits.'

"At this saying the earl was highly offended, and cried for horse, Sir Patrick, seeing the earl's fury, spurred his horse, but he was chased near Edinburgh ere they left him; and had it not been his led horse was so tried and good, he had been taken."—PITSCOTTIE'S HISTORY, p. 39.

NOTE 64, Page 98.—"*A letter forged!—Saint Jude to speed!*"

Lest the reader should partake of the earl's astonishment, and consider the crime as inconsistent with the manners of the period, I have to remind him of the numerous forgeries (partly executed by a female assistant) devised by Robert of Artois, to forward his suit against the Countess Matilda; which, being detected, occasioned his flight into England, and proved the remote cause of Edward the Third's memorable wars in France. John Harding, also, was expressly hired by Edward VI. to forge such documents as might appear to establish the claim of fealty asserted over Scotland by the English monarchs.

NOTE 65, Page 100.—"*Where Lennel's convent closed their march.*"

This was a Cistercian house of religion, now almost entirely demolished. Lennel House is situated near Coldstream, almost opposite to Cornhill, and, consequently, very near to Flodden Field.

NOTE 66, Page 101.—"*Twisel Bridge.*"

On the evening previous to the memorable battle of Flodden, Surrey's headquarters were at Barmoor Wood, and King James held an inaccessible position on the ridge of Flodden-hill—one of the last and lowest eminences detached from the ridge of Cheviot. The Till, a deep and slow river, winded between the armies. On the morning of the 9th September, 1513, Surrey marched in a north-westerly direction, and crossed the Till, with his van and artillery, at Twisel Bridge, high where that river joins the Tweed, his rear-guard column passing about a mile higher, by a ford. This movement had the double effect of placing his army between King James and his supplies from Scotland, and of striking the Scottish monarch with surprise, as he seems to have relied on the depth of the river in his front. But as the passage, both over the bridge and through the ford, was difficult and slow, it seems possible that the English might have been attacked to great advantage while struggling with these natural obstacles. I know not if we are to impute James's forbearance to want of military skill, or to the romantic declaration which Pitscottie puts in his mouth,—"*that he was determined to have his enemies before him on a plain field,*" and therefore would suffer no interruption to be given, even by artillery, to their passing the river. The ancient bridge of Twisel, by which the English crossed the Till, is still standing. Beneath a tall rock, near the bridge, is a plentiful fountain, called St Helen's Well.

NOTE 67, Page 103.—"*Hence might they see the full array.*"

When the English army, by their skilful countermarch, were fairly placed between King James and his own country, the Scottish monarch resolved to fight; and, setting fire to his tents, descended from the ridge of Flodden to secure the neighbouring eminence of Brankstone.

The English army advanced in four divisions. On the right, which first engaged, were the sons of Earl Surrey, namely, Thomas Howard, the Admiral of England, and Sir Edmund, the Knight-Marshal of the army. Their divisions were separated from each other; but, at the request of Sir Edmund, his brother's battalion was drawn very near to his own. The centre was commanded by Surrey in person; the left wing by Sir Edward Stanley, with the men of Lancashire, and of the palatinate of Chester. Lord Dacre, with a large body of horse, formed a reserve. When the smoke, which the wind had driven between the armies, was somewhat dispersed, they perceived the Scots, who had moved down the hill in a similar order of battle, and in deep silence. The Earls of Huntly and of Home commanded their left wing, and charged Sir Edmund Howard with such success as entirely to defeat his part of the English right wing. Sir Edward's banner was beaten down, and he himself escaped with difficulty to his brother's division. The Admiral, however, stood firm; and Dacre advancing to his support with the reserve of cavalry, probably between the interval of the divisions commanded by the brothers Howard, appears to have kept the victors in effectual check. Home's men, chiefly Borderers, began to pillage the baggage of both armies; and their leader is branded by the Scottish historians with negligence or treachery. On the

other hand, Huntly, on whom they bestow many encomiums, is said by the English historians to have left the field after the first charge. Meanwhile the Admiral, whose flank these chiefs ought to have attacked, availed himself of their inactivity, and pushed forward against another large division of the Scottish army in his front, headed by the Earls of Crawford and Montrose, both of whom were slain, and their forces routed. On the left, the success of the English was yet more decisive; for the Scottish right wing, consisting of undisciplined Highlanders, commanded by Lennox and Argyle, was unable to sustain the charge of Sir Edward Stanley, and especially the severe execution of the Lancashire archers. The King and Surrey, who commanded the respective centres of their armies, were meanwhile engaged in close and dubious conflict. James, surrounded by the flower of his kingdom, and impatient of the galling discharge of arrows, supported also by his reserve under Bothwell, charged with such fury, that the standard of Surrey was in danger. At that critical moment, Stanley, who had routed the left wing of the Scottish, pursued his career of victory, and arrived on the right flank, and in the rear of James's division, which, throwing itself into a circle, disputed the battle till night came on. Surrey then drew back his forces; for the Scottish centre not having been broken, and their left wing being victorious, he yet doubted the event of the field. The Scottish army, however, felt their loss, and abandoned the field of battle in disorder, before dawn. They lost, perhaps, from eight to ten thousand men; but that included the very prime of their nobility, gentry, and even clergy. Scarce a family of eminence but has an ancestor killed at Flodden; and there is no province in Scotland, even at this day, where the battle is mentioned, without a sensation of terror and sorrow. The English lost also a great number of men, perhaps within one-third of the vanquished, but they were of inferior note. The only distinct detail of the field of Flodden is in *Pinkerton's History, Book XI.*

NOTE 68, Page 104.—“——— *Brian Tunstall, stainless knight.*”

Sir Brian Tunstall, called, in the romantic language of the time, Tunstall the Undeiled, was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden. Tunstall, perhaps, derived his epithet of *undeiled* from his white armour and banner, the latter bearing a white cock, about to crow, as well as from his unstained loyalty and knightly faith. His place of residence was Thurland Castle.

NOTE 69, Page 112.—“*And fell on Flodden plain.*”

There can be no doubt that King James fell in the battle of Flodden. He was killed, says the curious French Gazette, within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey; and the same account adds, that none of his division were made prisoners, though many were killed; a circumstance that testifies the desperation of their resistance. The Scottish historians record many of the idle reports which passed among the vulgar of their day. Home was accused, by the popular voice, not only of failing to support the King, but even of having carried him out of the field, and murdered him. Home was the Chamberlain of the King, and his prime favourite; he had much to lose (in fact, did lose all) in consequence of James's death, and nothing earthly to gain by that event: but the retreat, or inactivity of the left wing which he commanded, after defeating Sir Edmund Howard, and even the circumstance of his returning unhurt, and loaded with spoil, from so fatal a conflict, rendered the propagation of any calumny against him easy and acceptable. Other reports gave a still more romantic turn to the king's fate, and averred that James, weary of greatness after the carnage among his nobles, had gone on a pilgrimage, to merit absolution for the death of his father, and the breach of his oath of amity to Henry. In particular, it was objected to the English that they could never show the token of the iron belt; which, however, he was likely enough to have laid aside on the day of battle, as encumbering his personal exertions. They produce a better evidence, the monarch's sword and dagger, which are still preserved in the Herald's College in London. An unhewn column marks the spot where James fell, still called the King's Stone.

NOTE 70, Page 112.—“*The fair cathedral storm'd and took.*”

This storm of Lichfield Cathedral, which had been garrisoned on the part of the King, took place in the Great Civil War. Lord Brook, who, with Sir John Gill, commanded the assailants, was shot with a musket-ball through the vizor of his helmet. The Royalists remarked that he was killed by a shot fired from St Chad's Cathedral, and upon St Chad's Day, and received his death-wound in the very eye with which he had said he hoped to see the ruin of all the cathedrals in England. The magnificent church in question suffered cruelly upon this and other occasions; the principal spire being ruined by the fire of the besiegers.



